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ERRY'S TRIUMPH



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BERRY.

BERRY'S TRIUMPH

The Story of a Georgia Cracker

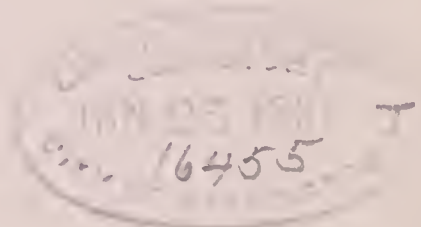
BY ✓

GEO. G. SMITH

North Georgia Conf.

AUTHOR OF "HARRY THORNTON," ETC.

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MACON, GA.

JOHN W. BURKE & CO.

1888

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TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

TO

MY OLD COMRADE IN ARMS,

MAJOR J. IZZARD MIDDLETON,

BALTIMORE, MD.

DEAR MAJOR : You, the son of a South Carolina rice planter, and one of the old Middleton stock, never saw a real Georgia Cracker ; and you, a native born Churchman, as you would be apt to call yourself, never knew much of a genuine Methodist ; so, in remembrance of days gone by, and of many tender acts of personal kindness from you, allow me to present my Methodist Cracker boy to you.

As of old,

GEO. G. SMITH.

PREFACE.

OF all misread—misrepresented—misunderstood people, the Georgia Cracker is the most so. By the Georgia Cracker is generally meant that Georgian who wears homespun, speaks in a provincial dialect, and who is entirely ignorant of the conventional rules of etiquette. By people abroad he is called pityingly, the *poor white*, degraded to his present lowly condition by the proud slave owner. Nor have our Georgia authors been innocent of this work of misrepresenting him. They have seen only one side of his character, and have made as absurd mistakes in picturing him as Mr. Cable in his picture of Parson Jones. I have had much to do with the people called Crackers, and I have had some little to do with those who ridicule them, and I avow my belief that a nobler, truer, purer, braver, better type of manhood has

never been found than is found among the rural people of the old State of Georgia. "How Berry Won" is a true story, as true as "Harry Thornton," and yet it is neither history nor biography. There have been a thousand "Berrys," as there were a thousand Harrys. I like boys ; I like these, my boys ; they have become very real to me, and I trust will appear such to my readers. The names introduced are those of real characters, and the story is as real as those in the historical stories of Sir Walter.

The view of Georgia life as it was is, I think, accurately given. My main object in writing the book has been to do good, especially to boys. The story is, if I may so express it, a true fiction. That it is a Methodist story I do not deny, but only one in so far as it presents a picture of Methodist people and their usages in an early day.

GEO. G. SMITH.

VINEVILLE, NEAR
MACON, GA.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
The Overseer's Death,	11

CHAPTER II.

The Burial,	18
-----------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

The Widow's Cry,	23
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

The Widow's Plans,	30
------------------------------	----

CHAPTER V.

They Look Around,	39
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

Mingo,	51
------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

The Turkey Hunt and what Came of it,	63
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

Quarterly Meeting in the Old Times,	68
---	----

CHAPTER IX.

The Love-feast, the Sermon, and Berry's Triumph,	77
--	----

CHAPTER X.

The School,	PAGE 91
-----------------------	------------

CHAPTER XI.

The New Teacher and the New Life,	112
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.

A Boy's Chapter about Hunting,	119
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Bright Days,	125
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Berry's Trip to Augusta,	132
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

In which we see an Old Time Camp-Meeting,	140
---	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

Berry Goes Coon-hunting,	155
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

The Widow Wood enters the Slave Market and Buys a Slave,	162
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Widow Wood hears some Unexpected News,	167
--	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

Berry Goes to School and Makes up for Lost Time,	176
--	-----

CHAPTER XX.

Conclusion,	183
-----------------------	-----

BERRY'S TRIUMPH.

CHAPTER I.

THE OVERSEER'S DEATH.



HE doctor looked grave, as he felt the sick man's pulse, and said :

“How do you feel this morning, Dick?”

“I am a great deal better, thank the Lord. I suffered powerful till about ten o'clock last night, when my misery begun to go off; I am mighty powerful weak, but I hain't sufferin' none to-day.”

The doctor looked tenderly in the face of his patient and said :

“Dick, you are a brave man, and a good one, and you must prepare for startling news. You

are not better, you are dying ; mortification has come on and you must go."

The dying man looked into his friend's face for a moment and calmly said :

"Dock, twenty year ago, I made my peace with God. He has bin mighty good to me ; I hain't afeard to go to him. Have you sed anything to Mary yit?"

The doctor shook his head.

"Well, leave me a little while to myself, and you go and tell Mary ; tell her as easy as you kin, Dock."

The doctor left the room.

A woman of about thirty-five years old, with two little children following her and a stout lad of twelve years old walking by her side carrying the milk bucket, was coming to the house. There was a smile on the rather homely, but gentle, face of the overseer's wife, as she saw the doctor.

"Dick is better to-day, hain't he, Doctor?"

He made no reply, but a shadow crossed the wife's face as she looked into his eyes.

"Sister Wood, I am sorry to say Dick is no better. He is dangerously sick. Send the children to the kitchen, I want to talk to you," he said in a soft voice.

"Asbury," said the mother, "take the young 'uns with you to the kitchen, and keep 'em thar till I call you."

"Yes, mammy, I will ; but is any thing the matter with pap ?"

"Never mind, son, I'll send for you torectly."

"Sister Wood," said the doctor, "mortification has come on, and Dick will die. May God pity you, and he will."

She had reached the back porch of the cabin, and sunk into a chair, and buried her face in her apron ; then, rising quickly, she said, "Let me see him, I must be with him every minit."

"Mary," said the doctor, gently, "you must calm yourself for his sake."

"I'll try, Doctor. O Lord, help me !"

The sick man saw her enter, and a loving smile covered his face as he extended his arms, and she laid her neck in their embrace.

"Mary, you know all. Dock says I'll die in a little while, and Jesus says I'll be with him in glory, when I do."

"Oh, Dick, how can I give you up?"

"My precious girl, for these twenty year you have been all my love and joy. You tuk me a wild, bad chap, and led me to Jesus ; he's not a gwine ter take me away and leave you alone, you know that."

"Yes, yes, I know him."

"Tell the children to come in, and send Bill for Brother Marks."

Brother Marks was the owner of the plantation Richard Wood was overseeing, and lived a mile away.

Bill met Brother Marks at the end of the lane, coming to see the sick man, and in a few moments he was at the overseer's bedside.

Dick put out his hand and said, gently :

"Dock says it is all over with me, Brother Marks, and I wanted to see you before I left. I want you to sing for me, and pray for me ; sing 'How firm a foundation,' and jine us in prayer."

Brother Marks was a fine singer, and he sang the old song, and kneeling prayed :

“Heavenly Father, thou art always good and wise, and lovest us all. This is thy child, thou art calling him home, and we thy children come to thee for him. Bless him, Lord ; give him to know that for time and eternity it is all well. Take his poor wife, his sweet children into thy hands, and keep them, Lord. May they never want for friends, may they never doubt thee. Oh, blessed Jesus, thy blood redeemed him, thy spirit moved him, keep him to the end.”

Thus he prayed, his lips faltered, his tears came freely and he felt the Saviour near.

A light shone on the face of the good overseer. Old Bill and Nancy the cook had come in, and responded fervently to old Master's prayer, the sobbing wife rose from her knees, with a look of tender love, and unchanging trust on her tearful face. Little Berry came in, with his brother and sister, and sobbed aloud.

The doctor's eyes were wet with tears. He drew near the dying man. “You had best say,

my friend, what you want us to hear, for you will pass without a pang, in a moment, and before long."

The overseer was calm, for he had the witness in himself.

"Brother Marks," he said, "I hain't got much to say. I have mighty little to leave behind me, you know. Give Mary a home this year, pay her what you owe me, and take my boy under your care. I know Mary has good sense, and I know she will do all she kin, and I know God ain't gwine to leave her."

"No, my brother," said his great-hearted friend, "she'll never suffer; God will see to that; and as long as John Marks has an ear of corn, or a grain of wheat, Mary Wood shan't want. You can rest on that."

"Thank God, now I can die easy. Tell Berry to come and see his pappy die."

The boy came sobbing to the bedside, and the father said to him :

"Berry, your pappy is a-dying. He's gwine to glory, and you are to keep your mammy, and

your little bruddy and sister. Berry, allers be honest, never tell a lie, don't be ashamed to be poor, seek the Lord, and God will take care of you all ; now, boy, promise to meet me in glory."

"I will ; oh, pap, I will ! I will be good to mammy, and I'll never do a mean thing and never tell a lie."

"God bless you, my boy. Now, Mary, take my head on your breast, and let me die in full sight of Heaven. Oh, I am so happy. Brother Marks, sing 'How happy every child of grace.' Tell Brother Tapley to preach my funeral from my favorite text, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

The voice grew fainter ; the tide ebbed now rapidly, and in an hour the good overseer was dead.

CHAPTER II.

THE BURIAL.



IN those days gentle hands made the shroud which wrapped the form of a dead neighbor, and good Sister Marks and Sister Tait and Sister Meriwether came to comfort the mourner, and make the shroud ; while Bill, the driver, went to carry to David Meriwether's the note from Brother Marks, and procure what was needed. The note read thus :

“BROTHER MERIWETHER :

“Dick Wood died this morning mighty happy. Send by Tom the stuff for his shroud, and I'll see you paid.

“JOHN MARKS.

“N.B.—The funeral is to be to-morrow at 12 o'clock, at my burial-ground. Be sure to come.

“J. M.”

Marks meant to pay the cost, but who that knew David Meriwether but knew no widow ever paid a bill like that to him.

The close fellowship of the old families in Wilkes in those early days was not disturbed by differences of worldly position, and no man was more beloved by the people who went to Pope's Chapel than Dick Wood, the exhorter and class-leader, and when the message went to the neighbors round, they came in numbers to console the widow.

The young people came and sat up with the body all night, and sang and prayed during the long hours. Dear Sister Meriwether took the baby in her arms, and sang it to sleep, while Sister Marks took the house under her care, and Sister Tait came over in her carriage the next day to bring the little things she thought poor Mary might need.

The heart-crushed young widow bore her grief as well as she could, and the little children sobbed themselves to sleep.

Bedtime had come, and Sister Marks said,

"Now, Mary, you must lie down ; you cannot stand this, and if you die what will they do?"

Berry was sitting in the corner sobbing. The thought of his mother's death now, for the first time, entered his mind. He rose, and rushing to her, buried his face in her bosom. "Oh, mammy!" he said, "you must not die. Pap is gone, and what will we do if you go too? Mammy, don't cry so. I'm gwine to take care of you, and do what I promised my pappy. Please go to bed and sleep."

The mother kissed the boy and quietly went to her room, and at last fell into a troubled slumber.

The morning came, and early came the visitors, who had come to look once more on the face of a dead man, who, living, all his neighbors loved. Kings have laid in state and not half so many true hearts have bewailed them as wept over Dick Wood, the overseer.

A country funeral in Georgia eighty years ago was a simple and pathetic scene. It differed from anything like a funeral scene in these days.

There was no hearse, nor horses with nodding plumes, nor splendid burial caskets, nor floral tributes, and still less was it like the sad burial of a city pauper, whose bones, that nobody owns, are rattled merrily over the stones.

The neighbors came, rich and poor alike. The body was placed in a plain pine coffin, covered with black cloth and lined with white ; and the calm face of Richard Wood as he lay shrouded there was a picture of peace.

After the last sad look had been had, and the last kiss from wife and children had been given, they bore the body to Brother Marks' burial-ground. There was no priest, nor clergyman, but David Meriwether read a Psalm, then a hymn was sung, and a prayer offered, and then he said : "Brother Wood was an honest man, an industrious man and a praying man ; he has gone to rest. Let us be ready to follow him, and let us not forget the widow and the children." This was about all that was said, and when the grave was reached they sung, "Come, let us join our friends above," and laid him in

the grave—and the dirt fell upon the coffin lid, and Mary Wood felt the pangs of widowhood. The crowd departed and the carriage rolled back to the overseer's house at the quarter, and the widow was left alone with her babes.

CHAPTER III.

THE WIDOW'S CRY.



POOR people have little time to brood. They may sorrow, but they must work. Mary Wood loved her husband; but Mary Wood loved her husband's babes. And she must take care of them—to her, too, heaven was a reality, God was a real presence, and prayer had a real power, and there was real comfort in faith. It was a sad night, but, sad as it was, she gathered her babes around her and read and prayed with them.

Dear little "Berry," as she called her oldest boy, had never in his lifetime, as he could remember the days, failed to pray, and this night, as he said, "Our Father, give us our daily bread," he felt, as he had never done before, what it was to have a father in heaven. There were three children, Asbury, Jane, and little Dick. Little Dick.

was the baby, a bright blue-eyed, curly headed little fellow, just able to toddle. He lay peacefully on his mother's breast nor knew his loss. Jennie was a matronly girl of ten ; there were three little graves in Brother Marks' burial-ground that told of the absence of those who should have been between Asbury and his little brother.

Brother Marks rode over the next morning with a basket of good things, sent by his wife.

"Mary," he said, "I knowed your pappy in Virginy before we moved from Powhatan, and I had your husband with me for fifteen year, and you need not be afeared that John Marks is gwine to forget his promise to a dying man ; so you need not be worried about matters, you can just stay here, and use the things just as you used to when Dick was a living."

"May the Lord bless you, Uncle Marks. You has allers been a good friend to the poor, and I know you'll be to us, but you know my pappy allers taught us to work and be beholden to no one, any further than we could help ; and while I am mightily obleeged to you, as soon as we can

get things fixed up, I will have to try and get a home."

"Well, I knowed you wer'n't going to depend on anybody's charity, but you must get started before you can walk. You have got to stay here the rest of the year, just the same as if Dick was living. After this year we'll see."

The tone of the old man was positive, and Mary knew how it would pain him to refuse his kind offer.

"Well, Uncle Marks, if you'll let Berry work for you, and let me tend to the milk, and see after the little niggers, like I've bin a doin', so that I won't feel like I'm gitting somethin' for nuthin', I reckon I'll stay till January."

"I was down at Brother Grant's," said the old man, "this morning, and he handed me this account, that Dick had at his store, and says it's paid."

The eyes of the widow glistened with tears as she said: "God is mighty good to his poor child."

"Be faithful, Mary, be faithful and he'll never forsake you," said the old class-leader.

There was little danger of want to the poor in Wilkes, and when John Marks' broad fields and warm heart were pledged to shield the widow, she could rest secure.

The widow of Richard Wood was about thirty-five years old. Her father, William Allen, had moved to Wilkes County before she was born, and settled on Fishing Creek. He was from Powhatan County, Virginia. He had always lived in a log house and never knew what luxury meant; when the new purchase was made, just before the Revolution, he moved out to the woods. He brought with him his axe, his gun, his wife, and three children, and but little else. The first summer the family of the settler lived in a board tent, under a great oak, but by the fall he had his cabin built, and they were sheltered from the storms.

There was no danger of starvation to so good a hunter as Allen, and he kept the larder supplied with venison and turkey, and bread corn was bought over the river in Carolina, and so the first year passed. Then crops came in.

The stock was fed on the cane, and on the grass which covered the hills ; and when the Revolution began he was, as said, "putty snug, right pert." But the war came on ; for some time things were quiet enough in these woods, but when Augusta fell, and the tories began to rob and murder, and his neighbor John Dooley was killed, and Elijah Clarke began to call the men to the rescue, he went into the army. Then he came home again to find his wife had been forced to fly to the fort for shelter, and his farm devastated.

But at last the war was over, and they were at the cabin at Fishing Creek again.

One night in 1786, while Mary Allen was a little girl, up the trail leading to her father's house came riding a stranger. His face was without a tinge of color, save a faint red spot on his cheek. His hair was black, tinged with gray, cut short, and lay upon his forehead. He wore a broad-brimmed black hat, and while dressed very plainly was dressed very neatly. Up to this time Mary Allen had never seen a preacher.

John Major, for it was he, said very gently, "Daughter, I am trying to find Captain Allen's house. Do you know where he lives?"

"Why, yes," said the startled child. "I'm his darter, and I'm a gwine home now. I'll show you whar we lives."

And Mary Allen led the Methodist preacher to her father's home. Well, I have not time to tell it all, but John Major had an appointment at William Allen's house and, before many months, the mother joined in society. The captain was not so easily reached, but he was profoundly moved.

"Mr. Major," he said to the preacher, "I al-lers thought before I seed you that God could do his own work without our a-helpin' him, and ef he wanted me to live with him in Heaven, he'd fix me up for it, but ef I kin git ready, I'm a-gwine to do it."

He took his Bible and sought out the words the preacher told him to seek, and became a member of society, and afterward a local preacher.

Mary Allen was about ten years old when her "pappy," as she called him, began to have family prayer. When she was thirteen years old, and Hope Hull was on the Wilkes circuit, she joined in society too. She had little chance for schooling, and she knew but little of what was in books, but she knew how to work and how to pray.

Richard Wood was the son of one of the near neighbors, and Richard Wood, when he was nineteen, asked Mary Allen to marry him. The old folks were a little doubtful, seeing that Richard wer'n't in society, but Mary was a good gal and her heart was sot on it, the mother said; and as Richard was a good kind of a boy she reckoned they'd better not cross 'em, and so they were married; and Richard took his bride to a little cabin on Squire Marks' place to work some rented land, and after a year the squire made him his overseer, and there he was when he suddenly was called away.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WIDOW'S PLANS.



HERE was, save that Richard was gone, but little change in outside affairs. John Marks said to her: "Mary you've got the keys and you can give the niggers their allowance, and take all you need for you and the children." And old Sister Marks sent down the wool for the winter clothes of the children, with the cotton warp already spun, and the widow wove it. The winter was coming on and something must be done for the future. So Mary sent Berry up to call Brother Marks.

"Uncle Marks," she said when the old man came, "you know I must move. You ought to have somebody to look after your business, and I must get somewhere when I can where we kin stay."

“ Well, Mary, I have ben a thinking of these things, and I know you are right. I loved your pappy and your husband, and I am not a gwine to forget you and the babies. You know Dick



UNCLE MARKS.

give me to keep for him the \$250 that come to you from your pappy's sale. I have had this for five year and it amounts with interest to \$325; then he left with me his savings, and these is \$500 more. So you have about \$800 and the furniture of this house, and then there

is the mar Dick used to ride. He raised her from a colt, and I allers intended he should have her, and then Polly says the old red cow, which you have had so long, wan't no account tell you tuck her, and you shall have her, and as the children must have something to ride in and you have something to move in, I reckon you must have the one-hoss wagon. Well now, stop, don't say nothing! let me go on. I was down to Brother Grant's, and he told me he had a little farm of one hundred and fifty acres which you mought have for \$750. There is a double log cabin on it, and a stable and corn house, and thar is fifty acres under fence, thar is a good spring, and some powerful good nabors, and I think that's the place for you, so ef you say so, I will go down thar and buy it for you."

The old man did not use the best grammar, and his words were not pronounced according to modern authorities, but despite that, John Marks was as fine a gentleman as ever left a college hall, and Mary Wood knew that the dear old man had added a hundred more dollars to

Dick's savings, and had found other good excuses for doing her kindnesses, but she knew she could not move his dear old obstinate heart, and so she simply said :

“That farm will exactly suit us, Uncle Marks, and you can make the trade for me, and we'll get ready to move.”

So the purchase was made and the Widow Wood and her children were soon to be settled in their new home.

There were four of them. Mary Wood was not a pretty woman. Her life on the frontier, her hard work, her want of those delicate surroundings which insensibly beautify, had not made her so. But she was an attractive and interesting one. With an honest, open, benevolent face in which all kindness shone, a great blue eye full of tenderness, and a sweet, clear voice, she was one of those to whom we are instinctively drawn. Then, too, she was neatness itself. Her plain homespun frock, the white handkerchief around her neck, the neatly smoothed locks of auburn hair were for every

day, and her little cabin was as bright as good taste and cleanly habits could make it.

Berry was now thirteen. He was a sturdy fellow, and rather a quiet one. Up at the dawn, out at the cribs to see about the stock, watching all the interests of his employer, he well deserved the tribute of the old man, who said : "Berry Wood was worth more on his plantation than half the overseers of Wilkes." Berry had the wildest, tenderest love for his mother and the children. He felt that, as his father was gone, all the care of the family fell on him. He had never been a bad boy. Believing as I do in the fearful truth, that we are prone to evil and that continually, I believe as firmly in the counter truth, that the grace of God is always ready to go with God's truth, and that when parents use the means which God supplies that the natural tendency to evil is almost entirely overcome ; and in this humble home all that love and faith could do to save the children had been done. The voice of prayer was the first voice the little ones had heard—day by

day, morn and eve, the voice of the father had been heard in prayer, save when he was absent, and then the pleading tones of Mary Wood had taken their place. Berry did not think he was religious; he intended to be, and when he was old enough he expected to be; but he knew that to help his mother and to do right were the things he ought to do now, and he did them.

Then there was Jane, who was the bright eyed daughter, and then came the toddler, little Dick, who was all in all to Berry. This was the family. Berry had come in from seeing after the worming of the tobacco and the gathering of the corn. The hour of prayer was over, the children were in bed, and the widow and the boy consulted about the new move.

The boy had become more and more thoughtful as he realized the responsibility of caring for his mother and sisters. Hitherto there had not been much call for planning, but now they were going away from the Marks place and the good man who had been like a father to the fatherless,

and he found himself in the presence of puzzling questions.

"I told you, Berry," said the mother, "that Uncle Marks was speaking of buyin' that place down near Washington. Well, he's made the trade, and we are gwine to move soon arter Christmas, and we must begin to fix for it. We've got the place ; now, what else have we got?"

"Well, we've got plunder enough to fix us up."

"Yes."

"And then thars Bet, the old mar, what Brother Marks give us."

"Yes."

"And Suk and Bossy, the cow and calf what Aunt Marks give us."

"Yes."

"And then I've got a sow, and five pigs, and there's Jennie's cat and Dick's fice ; we've got a heap of things."

"Yes."

"But we hain't got a heap more. We hain't got no corn, nor no fodder, nor no meat except what we'll have when we kill the barrow."

“Yes, I know that ; but you know I’ve got fifty dollars after the place is paid for, and I think we can make out with that till the crop comes in. But whose gwine to work the place?”

“Why, I am. Hain’t I big enough? Hain’t I been ploughin’ ever since I was as high as the plough handles? I’ll do the ploughin’, and Jennie will drap the corn, and I reckon you’ll have to do the hoeing, till I get rich enough to hire a hand. Oh, we’ll do first rate, see if we don’t, sweet old mammy,” and the bright faced boy threw his arms around her neck and kissed her, and she drew him to her heart and said to herself, with a deep sigh, “How much that boy is like his pappy.”

Uncle Marks would not hear of the move till after Christmas, but the home at the quarter was given up, and the widow and the children went to the big house, where they spent the holidays, and then the big wagon carried their movables, and Berry took the widow and children with him in the little wagon, and they moved to their new home.

Good Sister Grant had ridden over from the home place with some of her servants and had the cabin made ready for the widow, and had not forgotten to have a substantial feast ready for the hungry children; and when they reached the place they found the big wagon was unloaded and the scanty furniture arranged, and a great fire was blazing in the wide hearth, and the sweet face of the gentlewoman from the plantation was smiling its welcome to the good widow.

With a thankful, trusting heart, Mary Wood knelt with her children around the family altar of her own home that night. The children said their prayers, and even the kitten and Dick's fice seemed perfectly at home in their new quarters.

CHAPTER V.

THEY LOOK AROUND.



It was on a bright January morning in 1806, that Berry, opening his eyes in the new home, began to realize that he was the man of the house. He sprang up, dressed rapidly, for it was a cold day, and said his prayers, and then made the fire for the little ones to dress by, and went out to feed the stock. Mary was soon up, and went to the work of getting breakfast ready. That did not take long in those days. Hog killing was just over, and the sausages Sister Grant had left, and the crackling bread, made a savory breakfast for the hungry children. As to coffee, it was a rare luxury in those days even for the rich, and the sugar was carefully, husbanded for company times.

There were no cooking stoves or ranges, and

all the work was done in the living room of the cabin, with a few cooking vessels.

The widow knelt with her children and prayed trustingly and gratefully and lovingly to Him who had so cared for her in her lonely estate. Berry fed old Bet, who was contentedly munching her corn in her new log stable, and fed Molly the cow, who was caressing little Bossy, the calf, as quietly as if she was not determined to run away to the old place as soon as she could steal Bossy out of the pen. A pompous rooster was fussing over the yard attended by a dozen hens, and the sow was making a commotion in her new pen because she had not had breakfast enough, as she thought.

Mary had not seen the place before she bought it, and with Berry and the little ones began to look around. It was a sweet little home, such as one sometimes sees in Georgia now, and such as was common enough in those days. There was a hundred and fifty acres in the tract, one hundred in virgin forest, a beautiful brook was rushing over the rocks and then

went gliding through the canebrakes on the bottom. Grand oaks and hickories and fruitful chestnuts covered the hills. The little home consisted of two large rooms with a wide passage between them. The house was of logs and the spaces between the logs were stripped with boards, it was unceiled, and the starlight came sometimes glimmering through the spaces of the boards on the roof. There was an enclosure of some four or five acres around it, which served as patches, and a small garden for those vegetables which the chickens threatened.

The good Brother Grant had sufficient wood brought to the house to supply his new neighbor for some days, and had brought a load of corn and fodder, and so with the supplies of meal and a small sack of flour, the family was comfortably provided for for the time being.

Berry had fallen heir to his father's long rifle—the one his grandfather had used at the battle of King's Mountain—and though it was a heavy load for a little fellow, he could hold it with a steady hand and bring a squirrel to the

ground with every bullet, and while his mother and the little ones were tramping through the woods he thoughtfully carried the rifle on his shoulder. Directly Dick's fice sent forth a keen, sharp bark.

"Mammy, Trips treed, we'll have a squirrel for supper, see ef we don't."

There sat Trip, looking very earnestly up a large hickory. The boy peered anxiously among the branches until little Jennie said, "Thar he is, bub, right up in the fork ; don't ye see him ?"

"Yes, and I'll get him too !"

The sharp crack of the rifle soon followed, and down came the squirrel, shot in the head. This little story shows the boy. He was always on the lookout for something, and when he did his work he did it well.

Trip was not satisfied with one squirrel, and two more rewarded the hunters, and at last the explorers returned to the cabin to get dinner. Berry spent the afternoon getting the wood cut up, and at night they gathered together around the fireplace. There were no lamps, and even

tallow dips were too scarce to be used every night, so they sat by the light made by the blazing pine-wood, which was called "lightard" or "light-wood" because of this quality of giving light, and the boy and his mother began to plan.

"Now, mammy, sens we is all settled, I reckon we must begin to get things ready for our crop, and I am thinkin' what we kin do fust."

"Well, Berry, what do you think we kin do, now?"

"You know we are powerful skace of corn. We hain't got but a wagon load, and that ain't a-gwine to feed old Bet, let alone what we must send to mill; and we must git some truck as soon as we kin, out of the groun'; and I am thinkin' we'd better put the small patch around the house in oats. I kin plough 'em in, and I reckon we kin git somebody to sow 'em for me."

"But we hain't got no seed, Berry, and they are always mighty scace this time of the year."

“Well, I know that; but I am a-thinking that maybe Uncle Grant kin help us; any how, I am gwine to ax him.”



BERRY AND OLD BET.

“Well, you kin do that to-morrer.”

So the next day Berry threw his sack on Bet and rode over to Thomas Grant's. He had seen

him frequently at Uncle Marks', for they were old friends, and Brother Grant knew the boy. The house was larger than the widow's, indeed a great deal larger ; but it was about as plain. There were a score of Negro cabins scattered around, and large barns and stables.

"Well, Berry," said Brother Grant, "what now?"

"Well, Uncle Grant, mammy and I have been a talkin', and we is gwine to plant some oats, and we hain't got no seed."

"Well! well! my little farmer, how are you going to make oats without seed? and how am I to do it either, for I have got none neither?"

Berry's face fell, but Brother Grant pleasantly added, "But we won't give it up, Berry. Major Toombs made a good crop, and I think if you'll go and see him, he'll let you have some."

"But, Uncle Grant, I don't know whar he lives, and he don't know me, and then we hain't got no money ; but I am just obleeged to have some seed, so ef you'll show me the way, I'll go and see him."

“Well, I’ll send Jack with you, and I’ll write a note for you to take.”

So Uncle Grant wrote the note, which read thus :

“DEAR MAJOR: If you can help my little friend please do so. Truly,

“THOS. GRANT.”

So over to the big house Berry rode, guided by Jack. The major’s house was the best in the country. It was called the “White House” because it was the first of the kind in that section.

He had taken up four thousand acres of land just after the Revolution, and had brought a hundred slaves with him from Virginia, and lived in a right lordly way.

Berry had never seen such a house, and was a little frightened at going to it, but he wanted the oats, and so, after Jack left him at the end of the lane, he rode up the avenue. The old major had just ridden up to the house for dinner when Berry stopped at the gate.

"Hello!" said the boy.

"'Light and come in," said the major, and Berry walked up the avenue.

"Is you Major Toombs?"

"Yes; and who are you?"

"Why, I'm Berry Wood."

"Where did you come from?"

"Well, I come from up in Elbeirt, but I'm come now from Mr. Grant's, and he sent you this paper."

The major read it.

"Well, sir, what do you want?"

"I want some oats to plant."

"You do! Well, who's going to plant them? have you got any niggers?"

"Why, no, sir. Pap was too poor to own any niggers, and mammy says I am the only nigger she's got, les' it's Dick, and Dick's the baby."

"Well, who's going to plant the oats?"

"Why, I am, ef you or Brother Grant or somebody will sow 'em for me."

"H'm, h'm! me sow your seed! Well, where's your money?"

“Well, we done spent it all. We bought the land and we bought the corn and fodder; but I reckon you kin trust us—we’ll be sure to pay you.”

“You will, will you? Well, I reckon you won’t.”

Berry’s face flushed and the major burst into a laugh.

“No, you won’t, because I am going to give ’em to you, and I am going to send down old Mingo, and have ’em ploughed in; so come in, neighbor farmer, and let’s have dinner. Here’s my wife. Julia, here is one of your Methodist kin. Your ma is a Methodist, ain’t she?”

“Oh, yes, she is in society and so was pap, and my grandpappy was a preacher, but I ain’t in society yet. I’m too little to get converted.”

The good sister said gently :

“Well, Berry, I’m glad you try to help your mother. Now you must have dinner, and then you can go. Won’t your mother be uneasy?”

“Why, no, mammie knows I am all right, she’s never afeared about me and old Bet, ’case she

knows old Bet ain't a gwine to run away, and I ain't neither."

The major sat at the head of his well-laden table with the boy at his side. A toddy was brought to him by his man-servant.

"Well, Berry, you're a little fellow, but would you like a weak toddy?"

"No, sir; mammie said I must never take toddies and I ain't a gwineter."

"Well, you are right. Won't you have some ham?"

"Why, don't you say grace."

The major looked quizzically at his wife.

"No, Berry, but he ought to. Can't you say grace for us."

"Yes, mam: 'Lord make us thankful for what we are about to receive, and forgive us our sins, for Christ's sake, amen.'"

The major had a good many playful sallies with the artless boy, and filled his sack with seed oats. Berry, however, was not permitted to go till Sister Toombs came out with a basket, and giving it him said: "Take this to your ma; tell

her I'll call and get the basket when I go to Washington." It was well filled. There was butter, and sugar, and tea, and coffee, luxuries the poor did not often have in those days.

The mother was anxiously looking for the boy when he rode up to the cabin-door and brought the story of the day, and then Mary's heart swelled again with gratitude to Him who had raised her up friends in her widowhood.

CHAPTER VI.

MINGO.



THE major had been much amused at the artless simplicity of the boy and, sympathizing with the widow, he decided to send his favorite old slave Mingo to do the work, which he knew Berry could not do.

Over fifty years before this, when Squire Toombs went down from Powhatan to Jamestown to ship his tobacco to London, he found that the English ship, which was to return with a load of tobacco, had not long before brought in a cargo of African slaves. He did not intend to buy any new negroes, as these Africans were called, but the factor, who knew him well, said to him, "Squire, here is a young nigger who I wish you would buy. He don't belong to this crowd. They are Guineas, and he is a Goolah,

and they treat him bad. I'll sell him cheap. Here, Mingo !”

A black boy of about fifteen came running at the call.

“What's your name, boy,” said the squire.

“Mingo. Massa, no talk.”

“Want to go with me ?”

“Want home, home. No stay here ; treat bad.”

“Take him along, squire. Give me five thousand pounds of tobacco next fall, and I'll give you a bill of sale.”

“Well, I'll take him. Mingo, come !”

The little negro, with a broad grin of his black face, took his place in the large ox-wagon, and started for his new home.

The squire had a little boy at home, for the major of whom we are writing was then ten years old, and it was partly to please the boy, but chiefly to help Mingo, he had bought him.

When he reached home he called to Gabriel, who came out to meet him.

“See, Gabe, I've brought you a little nigger.

Take good care of him, and give him some supper. Mingo, your master."

Mingo bowed very low and said, "Mingo, massa—massa ; no big——"

"Come, Mingo, get supper."

The hungry little negro for the first time in his life had kindly words spoken to him and good food given him. He was bright, and he had little to do but to follow his young master about, and so he soon learned to talk plainly enough to be understood. His attachment to the family, and especially to young master, grew stronger and stronger every day, and Gabe and Mingo were always together. Like all the old Virginians, the squire kept fine horses, and Mingo rode them, with his boon companion. They hunted together, and fished together, and bathed together. One day, as they were bathing, Gabe ventured beyond his depth and would have been drowned, but the faithful slave brought him safely out. One day Selim, the blooded colt, ran away with him, and in his panic was sweeping toward a precipice, over

which was death. Mingo was riding the colonel's fastest racer, and seeing his young master's peril, he dashed before him, and, leaning over as he rushed by, caught the bridle of the colt, to be himself dragged to the ground. He checked the colt, and again saved his master's life, though he severely hurt himself.

The young master grew to be a man, and married and went into the war, and rode with Washington's troopers through Virginia and the Carolinas, and Mingo went with him. When he was sick a long time, in the camp at Valley Forge, Mingo watched him to life again ; and when he was cut down by a British dragoon on Colonel Washington's southern campaign, it was Mingo who sent his own sword crashing through the skull of the trooper, and bore his master off the field.

Mingo had never married. He had long been a Methodist, and as he was a new nigger and a Methodist his fellow-slaves had but little use for him. These were the avowed reasons, but the true ones were the major's partiality for him,



THE MAJOR IN THE WAR.

and Mingo's place of favor. He had once been the driver ; but now he was old, and so he had his cabin, his horse and, save to see after the stock and sow grain and do garden work, Mingo was really a free man.

"Mingo," said the major, "there's a Methodist sister of your's who has just moved to the Grant Gum Creek-place, and I want you to go down to-morrow and sow some oats for her, and if she needs you, you can stay as long as you please. Miss Martha will give you your rations, and you can take some corn with you, and go and help her."

And so next morning, bright and early, Mingo was at the widow's cabin.

"Morning, ma'm ! Massa Major sont me here for do some little job for you. Massa mighty pleased with little pickaninnie what comes yesterday ; missus, she say I stay to help you fix up—I'm Mingo, Marsa Major's Mingo."

"Well, Mingo, I'm powerful glad you've come. Berry's up to plant a leetel patch of oats, but the boy never sowed a grain in his life, and

he seemed to think everybody was like Brother Marks, and he told me how he axed the major to sow em for him."

"Massa Major laff at pickaninnie, and say I must sow em for him, and help to plough de patch up. So, Pick, show me de patch, and git de plough, and we will go to wuk!"

It was quite early, and the widow had not had prayers or breakfast, so she said to the old slave :

"Stop a little, Mingo, we are gwine to have prayer, and then you must have some breakfast."

"Mingo done hab he breakfus, but Mingo always glad to hear de good buke read and de prayer."

The service was over and Mingo and Berry went to the little five-acre patch, and in a few days had the work done. Mingo went back to his cabin every night, and returned every morning.

Thomas Grant was not forgetful of his needy neighbor, and kept an eye out for her needs, and

had his hands to split rails and pile the logs and get things ready for the crop to be made.

One day Mingo came with Jerry and a plough, and said to Mrs. Wood :

“Massa say I got nobody to tak care of, I must tak car of you ; and I tell massa I don git tired of watching dem lazy and sassy young niggers, and ef he say so, I come here—I like to heah you pray and read the book.” And so Mingo and Berry went to work on the widow’s farm.

The widow had her patch of flax and cotton, and her garden, which she worked with her own hands. She spun and wove, and had a yard full of chickens, and some thrifty pigs, and the faithful old cow supplied the family with milk and butter.

A Georgia home of the past days of the century, such as the widow Wood’s home was, has its counterpart in Georgia now, but not where my young readers are apt to see it ; and Georgia life as it then was does not differ a great deal from Georgia life in some parts of Georgia now,

but differs much from the life of towns and villages.

The home we have described. The farm was comparatively new. The fields which had been opened for cultivation were not fully cleared of the trees, and when we spoke of a log-rolling, we spoke of an important event in those simple days ; a house-raising, a log-rolling, and a corn-shucking were great things in the early history of a neighborhood. The widow had one large field of thirty acres and sundry small patches. There was little cultivated except those products a family needed for food. There were large stretches of forest-covered land, and in these were great quantities of wild-pea vines and native grasses, while by the side of every rippling brook the young cane grew in great luxuriance, affording fine pasturage for cattle, winter and summer. The fare at the cabin of the widow, and of most of the people, was not scanty, although it was plain. There was little wheat, and flour-bread was a luxury. Coffee and sugar were by no means common. There were but

few luxuries, but the substantials were abundant. There was bacon, and corn bread, and buttermilk, and now and then sassafras tea. The children were dressed in very homely garb. The winter clothing was of jeans, when wool could be secured, but often rabbit-fur was used in the place of wool. The shoes were made of red leather, which had been tanned in a trough, and made by a country shoemaker. One pair did a boy a year, and to go barefooted was the common lot of girls and boys till they were grown.

The country church which the widow Wood attended was a log house, forty by fifty feet, where they taught school in summer in addition to having preaching on one Sunday in the month. It had no window-glass and only some rough board-shutters to protect from cold winds or hot suns. The people were working people and few of them were educated, and Berry and Mingo were like hundreds of others, when negro man and white boy worked side by side in the corn-field. Mingo was very fond of his little work-fellow, and Daddy Mingo a great favorite in the hum-

ble home. He went back to his cabin almost every night, for that was his castle, but sometimes he spread his blanket before the kitchen fire, and stayed at the widow's home. When he did he spent the evenings with the family sitting in the corner, where he delighted the children with his tales of African life, and of Firginy, as he called Virginia.

One night in early spring Mingo said to Berry:

“Pick, did ye eber kill de turkey?”

“No, Daddy Mingo, and I should be so glad to kill one.”

“Well, me hear an old fellah gobble, gobble, dis mornin' as I came to work, and I tink you shall kill he. Get e gun all ready and I call e up for you, and you hab turkey dinner, suh.”

The boy was eager for the sport, and so the bullets were moulded, and the rifle wiped out, and Berry went early to bed to dream of getting his first wild turkey.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TURKEY HUNT AND WHAT CAME OF IT.



HE stars were still shining and the air was very crisp and cold, when Mingo called Berry.

“Come, Pick, dat ole gobbler be for leffing de swamp, and you no hab turkey for dinner.”

“I am all right Daddy Mingo, and Betsy’s loaded for turkey,” responded the boy, who came ready dressed from the other room. The coals had been stirred and a pine-knot fire was blazing on the hearth. The turkey hunters were well warmed, and then set out to the swamp.

“Now, Pick, you neber shoot de turkey befo’, you mind you no git de turkey wobbles when you see de old gobbler come a struttin like Mass Major when he wars he soldier clothes.”

“I’ll do my bes’, Daddy Mingo, to keep cool,



case I do want to give mammie one turkey I killed myself.”

“ Well, now, I git ahind a big white oak, and I call de old man gobbler, and e tink I his wife. Den he say ‘ gobble, gobble,’ and he fly down, and he raise he fedders, and come strut, strut, for find he wife, and when he no find her he raise he head, and luk, and while he luk you bang away, and don’t you miss he, Pick.”

“ I don’t spect to miss, and old Betsy’s powerful sure to send the lead straight.”

“ Well, now, hush talking, Pick, and walk mighty slow and easy, case old Mass Gobbler roost mighty high, and see mighty fur, and hear mighty quick.”

Silently old Mingo and Berry made their way to the swamp and took position.

Mingo drew from his pocket a reed which he had prepared, and very sweetly he sounded the note of a hen turkey. It was not long before the male bird began to gobble in reply, and then there was the whir of wings, and soon Berry saw through the open woods, a hundred yards

away, a grand gobbler coming toward him. Again Mingo sounded the call; the gobbler looked up and sent out the reply. He was a fine bird. His black feathers and his red throat formed a fine contrast. Berry lay still, and slowly the proud bird came nearer; at last he was in range; the boy's hand was steady and his eye bright, and when he drew trigger, down came the turkey quivering from a bullet through his neck.

"Good for you, Pick. You no have turkey wabbles. He big fellow; you give me he tail for mak Miss Julia one fan, but load up quick, we git anuder one down de crik."

And they did.

They were home by early breakfast, and the widow was justly proud of her brave boy.

What was she to do with two such birds? The turkey came in good time, for the next day was Quarterly meeting, and Brother Tapley, who preached her husband's funeral, was coming to see her; but even a Methodist preacher is not sufficient for two turkeys. At last, Berry said:

“Mammie, you reckon the major will care if I send him the biggest gobbler? I know he’s got a heap of tame turkeys, case he had a big one the day I was thar, but they ain’t good like the wild ones, and if ye think he won’t care, I’ll git Daddy Mingo to take the gobbler to him to-night.”

“Well, I reckon he won’t care. The major’ll know it hain’t because we think he’s poor. Poor folks like us is mighty techus when it comes to given things to eat.”

Mingo agreed that Miss Julia would not mind, and he thought the major would like to git it because Berry killed it.

So that night Mingo came to the white house with his message.

“Master, little Pick done shot two turkey. E shoot him tro’ neck, bof time. He say he mammie and two children can’t eat but one, and he hope you won’t care nor tink he too free, case he sent ye dis one,” and Mingo laid a great twenty-pound bird at his master’s feet.

“Why, bless the boy. I don’t care, eh—but I do care; I care so much that I am going to do

something for that boy. You say, Mingo, he killed two ?

“ Yes, sah, he shoot em bofe fro’ the head. De preacher he comin’ dar to-morrow, and little Pick he have turkey dinner for ’em——”

“ So the preacher is going to eat that poor woman out of house and home ; why don’t he come here, I’ve got enough for him and she hasn’t ? ”

“ Why, major, you would not have Brother Tapley to pass the widow by because she’s poor ; you can send her something to help her out,” said the gentle wife.

“ Yes, I can and I will. Mingo you load up the cart with corn and fodder and put in a big basket of sweet potatoes and some turnips, and if your Miss Julia ain’t too stingy get her to give you a ham, and some sugar and coffee.”

“ Never fear, ’bout Miss Julia, she neber have a stingy bone in her body.” And so the next morning, early, Mingo, loaded with good things, went to the widow’s farm. He was arrayed in his best, as he always was on preaching days.

CHAPTER VIII.

QUARTERLY MEETING IN THE OLD TIMES.



WOULD like to give my young readers a view of a country church in Wilkes in the early days of the century, and of a country congregation before "Lands increased, and men and farms decayed," so we will go to the Quarterly meeting at Grant's Meeting House in Wilkes County. The meeting house was the first in Georgia. It had been built by Daniel Grant about twenty years before this time. It was of great hewed logs. The floors were of plank, which had been sawed with a whip-saw. The windows were mere open places in the logs without window glass, and only protected by board shutters. The seats were backless benches. The pulpit was high up on the wall, and was a close box, and when the preacher went inside

he carefully closed and buttoned the door, and for a little while sank out of sight, and when he sat on the little bench inside the box his head could scarcely be seen above the high book-board. He carried his own bible and hymn book, so there was none on the pulpit.

There was a very plain pine table and plain hide-covered chairs; this was all the furniture. The people came to worship or to hear, not to be comfortable, and they did not expect to be so. The population was very large. The country had filled up very rapidly after the Revolution, and the liberal grants of the State to the soldiers had brought in quite a population, which was rapidly increasing.

There were few rich people and few very poor. The farmers owned their own farms, and lived at home. They raised their own provisions, and the wives made their garments. They were a sturdy set, and to some degree a lawless set, but they always went to meeting. A Baptist association or a Methodist Quarterly meeting brought out great crowds, and now to this Quar-

terly meeting at Grant's the Methodists came from sections forty miles apart. The Methodists could all be told by their dress. Every man wore a straight-breasted coat, and no sister had a ruffle, a ring, or a feather. The country girls looked very bright in the new homespun dresses, and the suit of yellow jeans which the boys wore as well as their fathers, were, if not very comely, very comfortable. The young maidens, and for all that the older ones, who walked to church wore strong, stout leather shoes, which in summer they carried in their hands. There were many, however, who rode, and the Wilkes girl who could not manage a wild colt, or the Wilkes boy that was afraid to ride anything was hard to find. The widow early on Saturday got everything ready, and Aunt Cindy Crutchfield, the old colored neighbor, came over to cook dinner for her, so she might go to Quarterly meeting. Mingo took little Dick and little Jennie in the cart, and as it was only two miles to meeting Berry and his mother walked. I am a little afraid my young readers would have

laughed no little at Berry as, arrayed in his Sunday fixings, he went by his mother's side to church that day. His hat was of wool, and was never very shapely, except that it had a brim or crown. His coat was of yellow jeans, and was a little small, for boys do grow so fast. It was a roundabout, and instead of horn buttons, which were scarce, the mother had made the buttons of his coat of gourd shell. His vest was of striped linsey; indeed you could see that it was made of a part of Mary's dress, his jeans pants, of blue, came only down to his ankles, where they joined or covered a pair of blue yarn socks, and his really large feet were incased in a pair of raw-hide shoes, which had never been blacked, and which had not been improved in looks by the Wilkes mud.

Berry was never a handsome boy, but he was a clean one, and as he trudged thoughtfully along by his mother's side the man who could read a boy would have said there was something in him.

In those days Saturday was almost as big a

day as Sunday at a Quarterly meeting, and a great crowd had already come when they reached the church.

Among the first who met Berry's eye was Uncle Marks.

"Law, mammy," he said, "if thar ain't Uncle Marks, and he's got little Jennie by one hand, and Dick on his arms," and he broke away from his mother for his old Elbert County friend.

"Why, Berry, bless my soul, here you are ; and where's your mammie ? "

"Thar she is ; and I declar she's so glad to see ye she is a-cryin' about it."

"Why, Mary, are you so sorry to see me you've got to cry? Well, you need not take on so. I ain't a gwine to stay long."

"Oh, Uncle Marks," said the widow, smiling through her tears, "I hain't crying for sorrow, you know I hain't. But tell me, how are the folks? Did you bring Aunt Marks?"

"No ; some of the little niggers was sick, and you know Polly thinks it committing a rale sin if she lets anybody nuss one of 'em but her. So

I had to leave her, but she sent you a power of love."

"Well, you're gwine home with us, and you can tell me all about 'em."

"Well, I reckon Polly, never forgive me if I didn't, and besides she sent some things; they are in my saddle pockets, for Dick and Jennie and the rest of you. But there's the preachers."

They were dismounting. There was Brother Tarpley, the circuit preacher. Brother Hull, the local preacher, and Brother Myers the elder.

Uncle Hull and Uncle Tarpley, as Berry called them, he knew very well, but the stern-looking, red-faced, stout little German who was with them he had not seen.

They went into the meeting house, where a good congregation were already present, and after opening the services Brother Myers began his sermon.

The elder was a German; there could be no doubt of that to any one who heard his strong German brogue. He had a sharp, clear voice,

and a very commanding way. He was so direct and so easily understood that Berry became interested from the beginning. He was trying, as he said, to search out the sinner and bring him from his hiding-place. Now, Berry had always thought himself to be an unusually good boy. He had no little of the spirit of Little Jack Horner, who sat in the corner, and felt, if he did not say it, "What a good boy am I!" and Uncle Myers talked about the drunkards, and horse-traders, and rich, godless planters who drove so hard to make money, and the proud girls who wore feathers and ruffles and rings. Berry felt very glad he was so much better than they, when the preacher, as he thought, turned right toward him. "Oh, my frents, ven you tink dat a leetle poy like dis one can have his heart full of tevilish pride and conceit, and can be so blinded as to tink he can be saved by his goodness, what can you say of yourselves? Ah, my son, my son, you tink you are ferry goot, but God sees your heart, and he knows how vain, and proud, and passionate, and wilful you

are. You are a leetle snake now, but you will be a pig one some time if your whole heart is not changed."

Poor Berry! The preacher had found him out, and had told him all that was in his heart. But after a while the severe arraignment of the whole congregation ended, and Brother Hull rose to speak. He looked to be a very stern man, and his voice was very full and round; but he was as gentle as a girl. He told them sin had abounded, sin did abound, but that grace did much more abound; and as he spoke of God's mercy and love and pity the hearts of the simple people began to overflow, and there were loud shouts of joy. Berry was used to that, and firmly believed that folks who did not shout now and then were not good much. He felt very sadly because Uncle Myers told him he was such a sinner and nobody told him he could be better, for even Brother Hull was talking to the old professors, and not to him.

The meeting was long, and then the preacher closed, and Sister Wood went to Brother Tarpley,

who said, warmly : “ Well, sister, I am going to see you, as I promised.”

“ Yes, and you must bring Uncle Hull, for Uncle Marks is gwine, and bring Uncle Myers too, if he kin put up with our poor doin’s.”

Berry was a little troubled at Brother Myers’ going. The sturdy German had read his heart so accurately that he was a little afraid ; but they had no time to talk. Uncle Marks took Mary and Jennie in his gig, and little Dick and Berry rode in the cart with Mingo, and they were soon at the cabin.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LOVE-FEAST, THE SERMON, AND BERRY'S CONVERSION.



BERRY and Mingo went to the horse lot, where they fed the preacher's horses, and then Berry rather reluctantly went into the house. He felt convicted of his faults. He was proud, he knew that Uncle Marks thought him so smart, that his mother trusted him so fully, and he knew he was quick-tempered, and often said very bad things when he was angry, and he could not hide it from himself that he was often very selfish. But how Uncle Myers found it out puzzled the boy. He found, however, when he came into the house, that Uncle Myers had little Dick on his knee, giving him a merry ride, and his look was not stern at all ; and when he came in and Uncle Marks said : " Well, my young overseer, I'm glad to see you agin—Brother Myers, this is Berry

Wood, the best boy in Wilkes County," and Uncle Myers replied, "Vell, Berry, I'm glad to hear dat. You've got a mighty goot name, for petter men than Francis Asbury are hard to find, and I hope you are going to be like him," Berry began to hope that he was not in such disfavor after all. No circles are brighter than those of true Christian people, and the early Methodist preachers were men of great cheerfulness, and so Brother Hull and Brother Tarpley and Brother Marks made things very lively until the dinner-hour.

What good woman in those days was not anxious to give a good dinner to the preacher, and, as the quaint saying was, to put the little pot in the big one at quarterly meeting times? Mary Wood was a good house-wife, and Aunt Cindy Crutchfield was a good cook, and the thoughtful lady of the White House, as the major's house was called, had supplied the widow's scanty larder with a sufficient supply.

"Why, Mary," said Brother Marks, when the table was surrounded after the blessing had been

asked, "you must be getting rich mighty fast sence you moved—a big turkey already!"

"That's Berry's turkey, Uncle Marks; he killed two wild ones t'other morning, and he's about the proudest boy in Wilkes. But you mustn't think I am rich, or proud—the fact is, I've got some mighty good neighbors. The Lord is mighty good to me."

"Yes, I've been a-trusting Him a long time, Mary, and I've seed many others trust Him too, but I never seed one who was forsaken."

"You say your husband was named Richard Wood, sister?" said Brother Myers.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I expect he was the same Dick that went to Parson Brown when he taught at your house, Brother Hull."

"Yes, he was the same."

"Well, Dick was a mighty goot fellow, but I never tought he would be an exhorter. The fact was, Dick was much a man, and would fight at the dropping of a hat, and drop it himself, but he was the soul of good humor."

“Dick was a powerful man,” said Brother Marks, “but after he got religion he was gentle as a lamb; he never fout but once after he joined Society, and I could not blame him much for that. You see, Dick was the best man of his age in the county, and Jeff Worthy had a bout with him once, and got worsted. Well, after Dick got religion he was mighty peaceable, and one day he went down to Petersburg, just after he married Mary, to sell a little tobacco. Jeff was thar, and he was a little in liquor, and he begun to pick on Dick. Dick done his best to get away. Jeff told him he was a coward and a hypocrite, and dared him to lay his hand on him; but Dick stood it all. At last he said: ‘Dick Wood, you can’t fight and you won’t fight a man of your strength, and you are a bigger coward than ever since you married Moll Allen, whose old pappy run like a quarter hoss at Kettle Creek; but you can’t git away from me now—you’ve got to fight.’ Dick stood it pretty well, but I saw the flash of his eye, and I knowed there was no use a-talkin’, so I just stood off. Dick fust took off his

old Methodist coat, like he was a-going to split rails, and he said, as quiet as I ever seed him : ' Well, Jeff, as nothing else will do, by the Lord's help I'm a-gwine to give you such a whipping as you hain't had in a long time.' So they formed a ring, and if you ever saw a fellow catch it, it was Jeff. After Dick had made him holler good, he got up and took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and the tears came into his eyes as he said : ' Jeff, I had to do it, but I don't bear no malice.' ' No more do I,' says Jeff. The next Sunday was preaching day, and they had Dick up in Society for fighting ; but Jeff was thar, and when the class-leader said Dick Wood had been a-fighting Jeff he got up and took all the blame, and, ' Now,' he said, ' my friends, I am a-gwine to join Society too, if you'll take me, for I know Dick Wood would have mighty nigh beat the life out of me if he hadn't had religion, and I am gwine to have it too,' and Jeff was one of the best members of old Asbury till he died."

Mary's face brightened at the story of Dick's fight for her father's good name, and she added :

"But pappy didn't run, did he, Uncle Marks?"

"Not a step, till the Tories gave way, and then he run after them."

The dinner was soon ended, for there were no second or third courses after the substantials were eaten ; and after prayers the preachers separated, Brother Marks and Brother Hull going to Brother Grant's, and Brother Myers and Brother Tarpley going to the Major's. The next morning, bright and early, the widow's family were astir, for the Quarterly Meeting Love-feast was to begin at nine o'clock, and at half-past nine the doors would be shut.

I do not deny the fact that this is a Methodist story, and that as a Methodist story it aims to give my little readers an insight into some Methodist usages of the days of our fathers, and so I will give them a view of an old-time Love-feast. The Society, as the church was called, met early in the morning. No one except the members of Society or serious people were permitted to go in to the meeting ; at

half-past nine o'clock the door was shut, and if one was late he could not go in. There were two plates of plain unleavened bread, and two plain glasses full of pure water. The Presiding Elder led this meeting. The little children of the families were admitted even though not in Society, but the older ones, if they had not joined, were shut out. Brother Myers told them that this was not a sacrament, but it was simply a feast of love, and that the bread and water were taken as tokens of love, and that was all. After singing and prayer they told, one after another, their experiences. The Presiding Elder told his first. He said :

“I vas raised a Luteran. My good mudder taught me the Augsburg catechism in German. I was talked to by the clergyman, and ven I vas about fourteen I vas confirmed. The Methodist preacher, old Brother Humphries, haf an appointment near vere ve lif. I go ; he showed me my heart. I saw I vas not a new creature. I begin at vonce to seek for a new heart. I fount it. I joined de Society. The Lord

called me to breach, and I left all, and I am here to-day. The rest vill now speak on."

Brother Tarpley, Brother Hull, and Brother Grant all spoke, and then Brother Marks got up. His face was aglow with joy. He said :

"My Bruthern : I was brought up in old Powhatan, in old Virginia. My father belonged to the Church of England, but when the Revolution came on, and our old parson stuck to the king, my father give up the church. I was in the war, and come to Georgia with Major Toombs' battalion, and when the war ended I was a fust-class sinner. It hurts me to think of how bad I was, but it did not hurt me then. We had a good farm, and a plenty of hands, and used to have gay times. The Methodists preached in our country sometimes, and there was a young woman who had jined 'em that I liked mighty well ; and I said if all the Methodists is like Polly—that's my wife now—they must be good folks. One day she said to me : 'John, I wish you would go over the Neck, next Sunday, and hear Brother Easter.' 'Well,' said I,

‘Polly, I don’t like the Methodists much, except you, but I’ll go ef you’ll go with me.’ So we went. Polly she went up close, and directly Brother Easter come. Well, I don’t know what he said after he had fairly begun—I just felt, as he went on, I was the worst man in Powhatan, and when he warmed up, and told about heaven, his face shone like Stephen’s. The folks begin to shout, and I looked at Polly. She looked like an angel, and directly I heard her say, ‘Glory, glory!’ and it sounded to me like one of the angels round the throne. ‘She’ll get there, and I won’t,’ I thought. There is a chance for me: the Lord says Come, I’m a-going, I says, and, bruthern, I went, and I got on the track, and, bless the Lord, I am on it yet. I married Polly, and we’ve been singing and shouting on our way to glory for these thirty year. We get happy at home, at the class, in the field; I’m so happy now I could shout a mile high—Glory, glory!” and the warm-hearted old man went around shaking hands, and everybody seemed to think he had a right to shout, but they seemed to think that Brother Sockwell, who

came after him, did not have that right, for Brother Sockwell was a hard man, and while a noisy man, his brethren used to wonder how he could be a Christian and do as he did. His face was pale and sallow, there was a constant frown on it, and his voice was harsh and grating. He said :

“My Brethern : There hain’t any man in this house that’s ever been as bad a man as me. I have got drunk and gambled and fout and cussed and swore, and abused my wife and knocked my chilren around, but when I got religion I got the gинуine kind—I did not get that kind that lets people be proud, and stuck up, and éxtravagant. I am afeared the Methodists is a-gwine back—they are too fond of fine fixings for me, and the preachers has begun to ask for too much money. Ef we ever expect to take the world, we must be plain. I don’t like this quiet kind of religion nohow—I want a religion that’s hot, red-hot, and that’s the kind I’ve got. There’s no hope-so religion with me—I know I’m a-gwine to get to heaven ef I hold out, and I started to

hold out, and I am a-gwine to keep on. I am an old-fashioned John Wesley Shoutin' Methodist, who believes in plain ways and plain living—hallelujah ! ”

Berry noticed that the brethren did not say Hallelujah in response, but Brother Sockwell looked as if that was because they were ashamed to be old-fashioned Methodists.

When old Sister Horton rose every eye turned anxiously toward the best woman in the settlement, as everybody said she was.

“My Brethern,” she said, “I am a mighty poor and ignorant creetur. I have been, in my poor way, tryin' to follow my blessed Jesus for nigh on to thirty years. I was living in Virginny when Brother Shadford came thar, just before the Revolution War. We had powerful times in old Brunswick. I had been a-tryin' to live as right as I knowed, and I used to go to hear Parson Webb, and read my pra'rs, but when Brother Shadford told us about a religion that could make folks happy, I said, That's just what I wants. I wasn't long a-getting it, and I've got it yet. I

have passed through deep waters and fiery trials, but the Lord has been with me till now, and he'll be with me to the end. I never could shout—I reckon I hain't good enough—but I'm mighty happy in the Lord. I am getting old now—I'm living on borrowed time ; my old man has gone over the river, and most of my children is gone. The rest of 'em is on the way, and I am gwine to slip away, some day, and you'll all know where I am gone to when you don't see me here no more."

If Aunt Horton couldn't shout, she made the others do so, and there was a noisy time. Thus the meeting went on for just an hour and a half, when Brother Myers closed it, according to the discipline.

There were a few minutes' intermission and then preaching began. The elder had preached the law on Saturday, but he preached the gospel in its fulness on Sunday. Berry listened eagerly. Was it true that Jesus loved him, bad as he was? Was it true He paid his debt? Was it true that He could and would save him that day?

and that he had only to believe in His love? The simple-hearted boy could not see how one could doubt God's word, and so he said in his fervent heart, "I take Jesus to be my Saviour, I will give my life to Him," and was calmly, sweetly at rest in that faith. Brother Tarpley said, "If there are any who want to join Society on probation, let them come forward while we sing, 'A charge to keep I have.'"

Berry rose from his mother's side, and gave his hand to the preacher, and gave his little life to God and God's Church. Was Berry converted? Yes, as certainly as Lydia was, and as quietly converted as any boy or girl will be who will give the whole love and the whole life to the God who has loved them so.

Brother Sockwell said about the meeting, it was mighty dry. The Methodists are a fallen people, nobody joined but one little red-headed boy "what didn't know what he was a-doing." But old Sister Horton took the boy in her old arms and said, "God bless you, Berry; I knowed your pappy and grand-pappy, and know you are

a gwine to walk in their ways. I am a gwine to pray for you every day," and Berry felt like he was very safe, with Uncle Marks and Aunt Horton and his good mother praying for him.

CHAPTER X.

THE SCHOOL.

BERRY was very happy in his new experience. It was a very quiet one. He saw Jesus, as he had never seen Him before, and trusting Him as a Saviour, he found a warmer love for Him burning in his heart. Why did not everybody trust Him, and love Him. Surely if people knew how easy it was to get to heaven, they would not be lost. But could it be religion which he had? He could not see any great change in his feelings. He had not had those dark hours, he had not had those joyous moments. He had not shouted. He could not shout. Maybe, after all, a little boy could not be a Christian, but yet he knew he could love God, and do right, and this he would do.

Mingo was very glad his little Pick had

“joined the Methodys,” as he called them. It must be confessed that Mingo was somewhat of a bigot, and believed no one was exactly right but the “Methodys,” and he hailed every accession to their ranks with great joy. He and Berry worked very faithfully during the spring toward midsummer, and things began to look bright around the widow’s home. The oats were cut and gave a good harvest. The sow and her brood of fine pigs had good range in the woods and the oat patch. The cow and the calf were flourishing, and the little chickens, despite the hawks and minks and polecats, increased rapidly. The corn had not suffered for rain, and the flax and cotton patches were both flourishing. The widow’s heart was full of thankfulness, and her prayers for her daily bread were mingled with praises that she had it.

They were sitting under the shade of the morning-glory vine, which grew over a rustic arbor at the door of the cottage, late one afternoon. The work was done and Mingo had gone home. Mary seemed very serious and

thoughtful. Berry was looking anxiously in her face.

“Mammie,” he said, “what is the matter with you? is you sick? you look so glum and solemn, I am afraid you hain’t well.”

“No, Berry; thank the Lord, your mammie hain’t sick; but I am thinking about your gwine to school. Mr. Egan is a gwine to take up school at the cross-roads next Monday, and you ought to go, but I hain’t got no money to pay for your schoolin’, and that’s what’s a troublin’ me. Thank the Lord, we’ve got a plenty to eat, and likely to have enough; the crop is mighty promisin’; but how am I gwine to get the money to school you and Jennie, I can’t see. Now if I had any larnin’ myself I might teach you, but I hain’t, and it hurts me to think that my children can’t have no chance to get an eddication.”

“Mammie, didn’t you read in the Testament the other day that God said ef we loved Him all things should work for our good, and I know you love Him, Mammie, and ef its best for me to

go to school I am a gwine, and if it ain't I don't want to go."

They had but ceased talking when a stranger came to the door. He was mounted on a poor old horse who had only one eye, and whose bones were very plainly shown, but he had a showy bridle and a pair of martingales, and the horse was doing his best to fill his place as the dignified steed of Professor Egan.

"Good avening, Mrs. Wood. I called to see you about your two foine children, and I have just been up to see Major Toombs, and he says that he wants to pay the tuition in me Academy of the two, and so you will plaze enter 'em at the first session next Monday, and I'll bid you gude avening, ma'am," and off he rode toward Washington.

The widow's eyes were wet with tears of gratitude as the old teacher rode away, and Berry said, "So you see, Mammie, it is just as I told you, the Lord will provide."

I am sure the little folks who will read this book would have been much amused at the sight

of an old field school, in the early days of this century. The school-house was of logs. There was a great fireplace going all the way across the room ; in the middle of this, under the chimney, there was a spot for the fire. There was no glass, nor sash, but the window shutters were of clapboards. The floor was of puncheons, and the backless benches made of split timber, for saw-mills were not common, and pine logs were, and to split a good pine, and hew it smooth, and put legs on it, made a good enough seat for a little Georgian in those times. The desk was a long, smoothly-split plank ranging up one side of the room, where every child was expected to write. There were about thirty in the school, and they were of all ages, from a boy of nineteen to a white-headed little chap of six.

It was into this school that Berry and Jennie came this July morning of 1808.

Mr. Patrick Egan, of County Cork, Ireland, was a professional teacher. He always spoke of himself as Professor Egan from Ould Ireland. He had taught, he said, from New York to

Gargy, and prided himself especially on his admirable discipline.

“The taycher who can controul his scholars is the taycher who can make them learn the book, and the only way to controul is to use the rod.” And on this idea Professor Egan acted in managing his school.

The thirty children who were at the school-house were of all classes. The children of the wealthy and of the poor met together in the old field school, and as they all dressed alike and talked alike there was a genuine democracy among them.

Many of them were kinsfolks, and there were no strangers among them but Berry and Jennie. Berry was an awkward boy, and one would have called him dull, and as he stood before the teacher that day dressed in a yellow homespun suit, awed by the grandeur of the professor, he did not make a very comely appearance ; and his hesitating answers to questions of the teacher made evidently a poor impression upon him. But Jennie was given her paddle with her letters

pasted on it, and Berry was put in Dillworth Spelling Book and the New York Reader, and school fairly begun. The children were all required to study aloud, and if one stopped the teacher stood ready to touch him up. It was a babel of sounds, which was only suspended when the class was called to recite. They were nearly all in the same class, except the beginners and a few who were in grammar, which Professor Egan prided himself on being able to teach—a rare accomplishment with the old field school-teachers of that day. There was good behavior the first day, and Professor Egan was as genial as sunshine. Berry and his little sister knew no one, and when the recess came they stole away by themselves and ate their frugal dinner, and then he tried to teach little Jennie her A B C's. He was not the best teacher, but he was the most patient. "Now, sis, look at that straight letter, that's *I*, and now this one here is *U*. Now what's this straight one?" "That's you." "No it aint, it is *I*." "Well, bud, didn't I say it was you?" "Yes, but I

say it is I. Not me, but I. And now, what's this one that looks like an ox yoke?" "That's me." "No, dear, it hain't, that's you." "Well, didn't I say it was me?" The cry for books came, and they all went into the school-room, and it was late before they reached home, for school was out at six and the cross-roads was three miles from the home of Berry and Jennie. Poor little Jennie! she had a hard time to learn those mysterious characters, and Berry was soon put to it to learn the long line of words in his spelling lesson. But he was very studious, and for a week he gave the professor no reason for a cross word.

Alas for poor Patrick! he was too fond of a "wee drop of the creetur," as he called the corn whiskey they made too freely and drank too freely in those days, and on Saturday, when his school was out for the week, he rode to Washington, where he drank too much, and all day Sunday he spent in getting over his debauch. On Monday he was in no good humor. The half insane always have unaccountable dislikes,

and Patrick had taken a great antipathy to Berry. Why, he could not tell, but he had made up in his mind to give Berry a sound drubbing as soon as he had a good chance. The half drunken, half sick teacher did not go far for a chance this Monday morning.

“Ye spalpeens,” he said to the school, “I see it’s o’ no use for me to be a gentleman with such a set of blackguards as ye are, and I am goin’ to turn over a whole buke of new leaves. I am going to thrash you, right and left, till I git some gude out of ye. Do ye hear—Berry Woods’ spelling class come up here.”

Now there was a very large girl in the school, named Amy Jones. She was the largest girl in school but not the oldest, and her size was the cause of much merriment to the children.

“Spell beegamy, Berry.”

The tone was so stern and the teacher looked so angry that Berry failed to notice how the Irishman called the word, but he spelt and pronounced it in a loud voice B-i-g A-m-y—Big Amy.

The girl turned suddenly and said :

“ What do want with me ? ”

It was involuntary, and the school burst into a roar of laughter.

“ What do ye all mane ; have you gone crazy to laugh in this Academy ? I'll tache you how to spell, sir, and pronounce too,” and he took a long hickory switch and laid in savagely on Berry's shoulders.

Poor Berry, he had given no conscious cause for offence, and now to be publicly disgraced was too bad, but he took the blows, drove back his tears, and went on with his studies.

There is no man as unforgiving as the man who does another a wrong, and the Irish teacher was now at all times anxious to punish Berry, and the poor boy bore it bravely for mammie's sake.*

But this was not his only trial. His poor little sister suffered so much to see how brutally

* If any one shall see a resemblance between this picture and one in the Dukesboro tales, he sees what I saw before him.

her brother was beaten, that Berry cared more for her than for himself.

Every day, on some plea or other, Pat Egan, the Irish schoolmaster, was sure to whip Berry Wood. The boy never whimpered nor struck back, but took the blows as meekly as if the blood of Dick Wood was not in his veins, and he told little Sis, as he called Jennie, she was not to let mammie know. But Pat Egan was not to escape the doom of tyrants, and it came in a way he looked not for it.

Berry has done his best to improve in his few studies and was learning to read pretty well and could almost write his name in little letters, but I shall not give my young readers a full view of these days unless we take a peep at the cross-roads and school when it was at work. The A B C Darions, as they were called, had to be taught one by one. Then came the class of little fellows who could spell in the book "a-b—ab," then they spelt out of the book, and then the readers read a chapter in the Testament, and immediately after recess the copybook of fools-

cap paper was brought out and the teacher made and mended the quill pens. They began to write by making straight marks, then they crooked them, and after a long time the little ones began to write with small letters. Ah! well I remember those dreary days, and that short, stout switch of good Miss Hayes, when the copybook was blotted or the letters were out of plumb.

Berry had a hard time at school, but Pat Egan was not his only persecutor. Bud Phillips was one of those boys whom we sometimes see who was mean for the sake of meanness, and he was always laughing at poor Berry and his little sister. He taunted him with his poverty. He ridiculed his little sister's homely dress. He told him he was a little sneak, and a hypocrite, and a coward. Why did he hate him? I declare I cannot tell, I can only say I have known boys and men just like Bud was. Berry was not afraid of Bud Phillips, nor of any other boy in that school, but he was afraid of doing wrong, and he asked the good Lord to help him to bear



these things, and He did. You will find a great deal said these days about goody-goody boys, by which, I think, the people mean boys who don't fight and lie and do wicked things; but while I want every boy to be brave, I don't think one needs to be a bully to be brave, or even to resent everything. They had been at school but a day or two when little Mary Crutchfield, a girl twelve years of age, the beauty of the school, and whose father was one of the richest of the patrons, took little Jennie under her care. Bud Phillips lived near them and they all came to school together. Molly was unsparing in her censures of Bud Phillips' meanness to Berry Wood. She did wish Berry would fight him, that was the only thing she did not like about Berry. He would not fight, and that was a great thing in those days. Dick Strange, her father's neighbor, had a large pack of hounds, and a fierce bull-dog, of which she was very much afraid. The bull-dog ran in the yard behind a picket fence, and Bud Phillips took delight in teasing him. Molly, as Mary was called, en-

treated him to let the dog alone, but in every way he tried to anger him. Berry went the same way from school with Bud.

One afternoon, as Molly and Jennie came near the gate, Bud, who had gone beyond them, began to infuriate the dog, who rushed angrily at the fence.

“Please don’t, Bud ; he’ll get out.”

“Much do I care if he does,” said the boy.

Vain boast ! for the dog rushed upon the gate, and it flew open, and with angry bark he rushed at his enemy. Molly was right in the dog’s way, in a moment he would be upon her, but Berry was just behind the gate, and as the dog passed him he caught his chain and block.

“Run, Mollie,” he cried ; “run, Jennie, shut the gate ; run, Bud !”

It was hardly needful to tell Bud to run, for he was already on the limb of a tree, and Berry was left alone with the angry dog. The dog rushed angrily on after Bud Phillips, but Berry’s little arms were strong, and he had the chain and block in his hand and retarded him. He knew

if he could only keep the dog at the end of the chain he was safe, and he saw that the angry brute was determined to catch Bud. He dared not turn him loose, but he wisely let him pursue the boy, who he saw was safe, and then dexterously threw the block and chain over a root and the dog was caught. It was well for him that the block caught in a forked root, but, as a good Providence ordered it, it did.

Dick Strange came out of his house, with his man Bob with him. The man took the dog, who looked at Bud Phillips with an angry growl, and carried him to his kennel.

"Bud Phillips," said Captain Strange, "come down from that tree. You have been worrying me and that dog till I can't stand it any longer, and I am going to give you what your daddy has not given you enough of. Get out of that tree, I say," and the whining boy came down begging for mercy, but the angry captain laid his horsewhip mercilessly over his shoulder till the boy was thoroughly punished. "Now tell your daddy if he don't like that he can come

and see me." So he did, and he said, "Dick, I thank you for the wallop you give Bud, and if he ever does it agin, give him twice as much."

Molly Crutchfield said, when she came home, "Pa, Berry ain't no coward, he is the bravest boy I ever saw, and I tell you he ain't half as ugly as I used to think he was," and when she told the story they all agreed with her. "Pa," added the little maid, "what makes Mr. Egan treat Berry so mean? He is a mean old thing, any how, and whips everybody when he can get a chance, but Berry has been beat and beat and beat and he don't do nothing. Yesterday I heard him talking to little Jennie. She was crying about it like her heart would break, and said she was a going to tell her ma, but Berry, he begged her not to do it, cause he said Major Toombs was paying for his schoolin', and his mother was so anxious for him to go to school and he said, 'Sis, buddy don't mind it, and you mustn't.' I tell you, pa, Berry Wood is the bestest Christian I ever seen, if he ain't but a boy ;

and if I was as big as buddy, Pat Egan shouldn't whip Berry another time or he'd have to whip me, and I know he couldn't do that."

The little girl's cheek was glowing. She felt the cruel injustice before, but now that Berry had shown his courage for her it burned in her very heart.

"Well, Moll," said John, "that's jist what buddy's made up his mind to do. I'm a going to stop that, or run old Pat Egan out of Wilkes County. John Crutchfield ain't the boy to sit still and take everything, and if I hadn't joined Society I'd knocked his old head off before this, but Society or no Society, he shan't beat Berry Wood any more, if I can help it."

Now, my little readers must remember John was born just after the Revolution, and in those days the boy who was afraid of anything was the scorn of the neighborhood.

So the next morning Pat Egan made ready for his usual exercise. He had heard of the affair at Strange's and of Bud's horse-whipping, and he determined to bring Berry in to avoid

the censure which his past cruelty might call out.

The school had but begun, when he said, in no good humor :

“Berry Wood, Bud Phillips, come up here. So you’ve been a botherin’ the neighbors, have ye, and making it nadeful that a gintleman shall horsewhip one of me students. Now, Bud Phillips, ye got just what ye desarved, but I am going to give the same midicin to this obstreperous buoy, that is always bringing disgrace on this Academy. Off with your coat, sir.”

“No, Berry, you keep your coat on. Mr. Egan, Berry Wood ain’t done nothing, and he shan’t be whipped.”

The school looked on with surprise as John Crutchfield got up from his chair, for being one of the big scholars, John had a chair of his own. John was full six feet high and weighed one hundred and seventy-five pounds, and the dried-up little Irishman looked at his size with real anxiety. But if Patrick was not strong he was plucky, and he said :

“John Crutchfield, you are a mutineer, sur. You lave this Academy. As sure as me name is Pat Egan I am going to give this spalpeen a sound thrashing.”

“But you ain’t,” said John.

The Irishman raised his switch and like a wild-cat John pounced upon him. He tore his switch from his hand, threw him on the floor and then calling to Berry said :

“Now, Berry, take that switch and give the old heathen what he needs.”

“No, John, let Mr. Egan up. My pap told me never to do a mean thing, and it will be rale mean for me to hit an old man when he’s down.”

“Well, I’ll let you go, Pat Egan, and I’ll go too, and if pappy and Major Toombs can have any say, so you’ll go from here purty soon. I wouldn’t be taught grammar by no sich an’ old Tory as you are, for I know you was a Tory, you are too mean to be a Whig ; but if you lay your hand on Berry Wood, I’m a gwine to pay the debt with interest.”

“I’ll hav the law on ye,” muttered old Egan,

as he rose from the dusty floor. He knew his day of glory was gone, and he left the school-house that evening forever.

Now I am sure that many who read these pages will think I give too great prominence to these acts of violence, and am a little too tolerant to fighting boys and plucky girls, but my readers must remember that seven years of hard combat with British and Tories, and years of battle with Indians, and a constant warfare with wolves, wild-cats, and panthers, had brought up a race of men and boys who, like the knights of old time, settled most questions by the might of the strong arm. Not that I would have this brought back again, for we have other ways of fighting than by the blow of a brave arm, and we are little in danger from men like Pat Egan as long as school-boards rule. Our perils come otherward than from a teacher's tyranny. If any one should say Berry was an impossible boy, I think I could find his counterpart and give his name. The grace of God and a good mother can do much even for a hot-tempered boy like Berry was.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEW TEACHER AND THE NEW LIFE.



PROFESSOR EGAN, from County Cork, who had whipped the boys from "New York to Gargy," had never had a case of open rebellion before which he had not put down, and now in his ould age, for the sake of a poor red-headed pauper, was he to be publicly disgraced? He would take the law on the rebel.

It was Friday when John Crutchfield made the assault, so that nothing prevented his weekly trip to Washington. His first visit was to his own countryman, Dennis Callahan's grocery, where Pat drank a full glass of the "critter," as he called it, and then he went over to Major Walton's law office.

"Major Walton," he said, "I am Professor Egan, from County Cork, in ould Ireland. I am a graduate of Meath College, sur, and am a tay-

cher. I've taught boys from New York to Gargy, and have always had gude discipline ; I come to this blissid county of Wilkes on strong solicitation, sur, and took charge of the Cross-Roads Academy, sur, and I am the victim, sur, of a conspiracy, a rebellion, a mutiny, sur, and if there is any law in this blissid land I want that law, sur, on John Crutchfield."

"Oh, my old friend Squire Crutchfield ; has he been guilty of conspiracy, mutiny, and rebellion ?"

"No, sur, it was not the square. I could have stud it if it had bin ; it was his spalpeen of a son, bad luck to him. I don't want him to be put into the state prison, sur, for I am a marci-ful man, but he must be punished, sur, if there is a law in Wilkes."

"Well, Professor, I am afraid I can't take your case. I could only make a mild case of holding a teacher."

"Holding a taycher, sur ? a mild case ? What's the land coming to when a taycher can be hilt. I can't stond it. I won't, if the law will not do

me justice, I will mount my stade and cross the Savannah River, and Wilkes County shall never see me face again. But as ye will not take me case, I'll bid ye gude day." And he went back to Dennis.

"Oh, Dennis, my man, in ould Ireland we could have some roights. Here even a taycher has none. Give me another glass, Dennis dear."

Poor old Patrick ! As Thomas Grant and John Crutchfield rode out of the village that evening, they saw the "stade" grazing in a field near Dennis Callahan's grocery, and Pat Egan lying under a tree fast asleep.

"Tut, tut, Brother Grant, thars our teacher. I wanted him because they said he was good to keep order, but we can't stand that ; that's four times in four weeks he has been drunk. But where are we to get a teacher from ?"

"I think I can supply you. My wife's nephew has been studying at Davidson College, North Carolina, and he has come to Georgia for his health. I think we can get him. He has just come, and is a fine young fellow."

“Well, see him, and tell him to be at the cross-roads Monday, and I’ll take the responsibility of giving him the place.”

So Mr. Thomas Lacy took the school. The children came on Monday, but Pat did not come, and Mr. Lacy came riding up at school-time and called them in. He said to them :

“I have just come to Wilkes, and my relative says you are without a teacher, and I am going to teach you for a few months. I don’t expect to be harsh, but intend to be firm, and I hope you will not give me any trouble. I shall like you all, and I want you to like me. You can now go to your books.”

The teacher soon changed the whole order of things, and began to introduce new studies. He soon saw Berry was no ordinary boy, and when he put him in the Federal Calculator he found him a remarkable arithmetician. He was so gentle and so well-behaved that the teacher became greatly attached to him.* He saw he was so anxious to learn that he put him in a class by him-

* Dukesboro’.

self, and in the six months Berry was at school he made a really surprising advance. He learned to write, and he began to catch some glimpses of the wide world beyond his humble home.

The first letter Berry wrote was to his Uncle Marks. I give it pretty much as Berry wrote it.

“MR. JOHN MARKS, BROAD RIVER :

“DEER UNCLE MARKS,—We is al wel, and i hope these few lines wil find you injoyin the same blessin, i am gwine to schule, the teacher is Mr. Lacy, he is a mighty good man, i have lerned to rite a leetle, i send Ant Marks a heep of lov. Tel hur to pray for us. Your frend,

“ASBURY WOOD.”

Little Jennie made good progress, and when the winter holidays came Berry had a new life, for Mr. Lacy had given him some books, and Berry had found the joys of reading. They were the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” “Weems’ Life of Marion,” and the “Life of Franklin.”

He was busy all his Saturdays, and with Mingo’s

help the crop was gathered, and the barns were full.

Mingo had sowed a little patch in wheat and in rye, and Jennie and Dick and Berry together had picked out the acre they had in cotton, and the great spinning-wheel hummed with a merry song as the widow walked to and fro spinning both warp and filling for the homespun which she wove. The Lord helps those who help themselves, and I have never seen any man or woman who trusted in God and did the best that could be done forsaken, and Mary Wood's heart sung with gratitude for God's great mercy toward her.

Berry Wood was a Christian boy, but he was a boy, and it was no easy matter for him to bear the trials to which he had been subjected. It was hard for him to keep hatred to the old teacher out of his heart, and he felt more than once that but for Jennie and his mammie, and the Society, he would just like to get his hands on Bud Phillips for a little while, but he prayed against all, and God helped him. He trusted in Jesus, and was helped. I am afraid Berry was a

little vain. I have too often seen how we in avoiding one evil rush on another to suppose that Berry could be made a hero of by his friends, and could be praised so by Mr. Lacy, the teacher, without having a little too good an opinion of himself. I think sometimes he was a little impatient, and perhaps not as deferential to his mother as he ought to have been, though he loved her so much. There are few of us who have gray heads now who do not look back and regret that we did not *honor* in manner as well as we loved in reality those who gave us birth. But that November evening, as they sat by the bright fire of the widow's hearth, Mary Wood looked at her boy and thought of the death-scene in the Elbert cabin, and of what the boy had been since, and while the tears came into her eyes, she looked to God, and blessed Him for giving her such a child. Do you suppose your mother has done that for you?

CHAPTER XII.

A BOY'S CHAPTER ABOUT HUNTING.



BOYS love to hunt. I hardly know why, but they do. I have a pointer dog named Jumbo. He never was with any other pointer, and never hunted a quail in his life, but he runs after birds, and little chickens, and even butterflies, and that's the way with boys. Berry was no exception to this rule. He dearly loved the woods. Squirrels were very common, and there were many in the woods near his mother's cabin, and Berry could handle Old Betsy well. It did not take much money to buy the powder and lead needed for an old-time rifle, and he was able to bring down many a squirrel; and more than one large chicken-hawk that was casting longing eyes on the chickens of the yard fell fluttering to the ground from a bullet from the

boy's rifle. He took little Jennie with him sometimes, and sometimes went alone, and sometimes Mary shut the door of the cabin and walked with him on his tramp. Our old friend, Daddy Mingo, was, now that the crop was laid and gathered in, only occasionally at the cabin, but he still kept an oversight of things. The truth was, Mingo had got too old to oversee anybody, and yet he was so fixed in the habit of overseeing that he could hardly get along without it, and so Pick and himself formed a very agreeable force. Mingo was a mighty hunter, and had a famous possum and coon dog named Bose. He came one day to the widow's after Berry's school was out, and the frost had fallen on the trees, and the persimmon plums hung in rich luxuriance from the trees.

"Pick, would e lik to hunt e possum?"

"Yes, yes, Daddy Mingo, ever so much."

"Well, you get a big pile fat lightard, and we get a fine fellow for sure to-night. I know e been atter dem simmons down by the corn-field, and if e do, Bose he fine 'im for true."

So Berry got up the light wood, and as John Crutchfield was going by he asked him over and told him to bring Daniel Grant. They were



big boys, and Berry, like all little fellows, liked their company. So they came. The widow gave them a good supper and then they lit their torches and went to the woods. Bose was in

fine plight. It was not long before his bark was heard. "Dar's a possum dar for true—Bose neber lies."

The tree was reached; it was a persimmon, and on a fork of it lay a large opossum.

"How are we going to get him?" said Berry.

"Well, I'll show you," said John; "I've shuck many a possum out of a simmon tree before this," and he threw his coat off and swung himself up by his arms into the bushy tree. "Hand me a pole, Berry; I see him. He's away up in the crotch; look out, there he comes;" and down with a leap he came on to the ground.

Bose was looking for him, and he soon had him at his feet. Berry started to pick him up, when Uncle Mingo—"Ha, Pick, better let dat possum alone. He no ded; you tek he tail and he bite you true. You neber know possum ded till you eat 'em."

"Here, Uncle Mingo, I fixed the stick," said Daniel, and Mingo put the possum's tail in a split hickory pole which was only opened wide

enough to hold it and it closed upon it at once with a close clamp, and they were off again. Directly Bose treed another.

"Where is he? I can't see him," said John, after some search.

"Nor me neither," said Daniel.

"I know he's dar. Bose neber tell no lie; he's right up dat tree, for sure."

The light wood torches were made brighter, and John climbed the black haw, where, at last, on the topmost limb, he found the possum. He shook the tree, but the possum held to his place. He pushed him loose with his pole, but he took a lower limb. At last, driven from point to point, the possum wrapped his tail around the limb and hung suspended; but a blow from John's pole caused him to let go, and down he came. They caught another, and then, about 12 o'clock, got back to the cabin. The widow had lived too long on the frontier not to know what a savory dish a fat possum and sweet potatoes made, so she said: "Now, boys, come over to-morrow, and, Uncle Mingo, you be sure to

come, and I'll give you a possum dinner, and we'll have some good simmon beer."

It was a royal dinner. The days of great roasts, and terrapin stews, and French cooking are not, to my taste, like those old days. Delmonico could not furnish such a feast as Mary Wood's fat possum and sweet potatoes and simmon beer. I suppose my little friends never drank any persimmon beer, and I am afraid they never will ; but the harmless beverage was one of the joys of my childhood, as it was of Berry's.

The boys came over, and Uncle Mingo came with them, and they had a royal feast.

I suppose most of my little readers never saw an opossum, as these queer little pigs are called, but in those days he was quite a common inhabitant of the forests, and paid sometimes visits to the house ; but save that he made a raid on the corn-fields sometimes, he was rather harmless. It was the coon which gave the most trouble, and we must get a view of a coon-hunt, when John Crutchfield and Daniel Grant get it up, which they will some time.

CHAPTER XIII.

BRIGHT DAYS.



HERE were few happier homes in Wilkes than the Widow Wood's. The shadow had fallen, and did not all go, but the light of the Lord was on the good woman's home.

The harvest had been unusually good. She had made on her twenty acres of corn nearly five hundred bushels, her oats gave her over one hundred and fifty bushels, and her cotton had given her over one thousand pounds of seed-cotton, which was a three-hundred-pound bale of lint. She had six fat pigs, her cow was giving her abundant supplies of milk and butter, the yard was full of chickens, and there was a dozen turkeys, and even a flock of geese.

Surely God had provided richly for her and her orphan babes. The major had a gin, and he

ginned her cotton, and hauled it on his own wagon to market, and sold it for one hundred dollars. He bought a full supply of sugar, salt, coffee, and a little five-gallon keg of molasses, and then brought her back sixty dollars, which was the net money-profit of her first year's farming.

When Uncle Marks came down, bringing Polly this time, he said :

" Well, Mary, I reckon I'll have to take you back to Elbert. You beat me a-farming so far I'm ashamed of myself."

" Well, Uncle Marks, I'm mighty thankful, and I feel it's all a-owin' to the good Lord, and to you and to the major ; and, Uncle Marks, it hurts me to think he's not a Christian man nuther."

" No, Mary, Gabe Toombs is as good a hearted man as ever lived, and I asked him one day why he warn't a Christian. He stopped a while, and he said : ' John Marks, if everybody in the church was like you and Dave Merriwether I think I would have been, but I tell you, when I hear Jim Sockwell shout so loud, and know how mean he treated poor old Mary Davis in a horse-trade,

I git so mad I am just obliged to swear a little.' But I hope you'll pray for him, and maybe he will come in yet."

"Well, Uncle Marks, now we are a leetle ahead and Berry's got to go to school, I am thinking of hiring a hand to make the crop; Daddy Mingo is too old, even if I could get him, and I want you to git me one."

"Well, I know where there's a boy that will just suit you."

And so on New Year's Lias came and took charge of the farm, and Berry went back to school to Mr. Lacy.

Berry worked every Saturday, and Uncle Mingo still seemed to think he was bound to look after the widow's affairs, and came and helped.

How fast Berry did learn! Mr. Lacy quietly corrected his errors, and the boy left off, *when he thought of it*, many an obsolete word that belongs only to crackers now.

He grew rapidly, and when he was in his fifteenth year he really looked as though he were three years older.

Again the Lord smiled, and again were the barns filled. The hire of the man was paid, and as Bet was getting a little old, another horse was bought.

"Mammie," said Berry, "I don't want to go to school next year."

"Why, Berry, what do you mean? I thought you liked to learn."

"Well, so I do ; but I have learned enough now to help me to learn more, and I am not a-going to school and have you and Jennie working in the field to keep me there. I want to quit anyhow a year or two, till we get a little better off, so I can keep you from having so much to do. I've been going to school for a good part of two years. I've been nearly through my arithmetic, and I think a boy that's near fifteen years old and has gone that far can go further. And then, mammie, Dick and Jennie are to be sent, and it'll take money to send them, and I've got to help you make it. So, mammie, dear, let me stay at home this year."

"Well, so I will if you say so, though I was

mightily sot on your going agin. Your pappy used to say that whatever happened he was a-gwine to give his children some chance for an eddication, and I am gwine to do it, the Lord a-helpin' me, as he will. Why, there's Daddy Mingo. How d'ye, Daddy?"

"Toluble, missa, only toluble; dese rheumaty pains make ole Mingo grunt, missa. Mas' Major say could yer let little Pick go wid de wagon to Augusty. 'E say 'e got a leetle rheumaty too, and he can't go, and he promised some man in Augusty to send 'im a'load of cotton, an' 'e say he want little Pick to go, 'cause he tink he do de work about right."

"Why, certainly, Daddy; we'll do anything the major wants us to do, but Berry he hain't never been any further than Washington; but ef the major says so he is willing, I know, and I let him go down to major's and see him about it."

"All right, Daddy; when does he want to go?" says Berry.

"Well, 'e say you come for see 'im to-morrow, and 'e wagon will start Monday."

So Berry went to see the major.

“Well, my little Methodist, here you are ! ”

“Yes, sir ; Daddy Mingo says you want to see me.”

“Yes. I promised Meals & Calhoun, in Augusty, to send them a load of cotton, and I can't go myself, and my overseer is gone to Abbeville, and I thought maybe I could trust you. You will promise me you won't get drunk, nor sell my cotton and run away with the money, eh ? ”

“Well, if you think I will, you'd better not send me.”

“Well, I will trust you. You will have to get some bedclothes, for you will have to camp out. The roads are mighty bad, but Mr. Calhoun says I must try and get my cotton there, and I reckon the team will go through all right ; and Bill, who drives the steers, is a good steady hand, so I reckon you won't have any trouble. You will have to stay all night at Jack Combs' wagon-yard in Augusta, and stay Sunday ; then Bill knows about it, and he'll show you where it is. You can't get back very well in less than

two weeks, for you will bring a load for Tom Grant, at the store. The team will come by early in the morning, and you can get in at home."

"I'll do my best, major. Good-by." And Berry got ready for a trip to the largest city in Upper Georgia. About how he got there, and what he saw, I will let him tell himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

BERRY'S TRIP TO AUGUSTA.



AUGUSTA was at that time the only city in Upper Georgia. It had about five thousand people in it, and did a great deal of trade, which came to it from all sections of the State, as well as from the counties just about it. To go to Augusta was the event of a boy's life, and one who has been to China in these days is not so great a traveller as the boy who went to Augusta in those times. Berry was well aware that he must fix up, and so his good mother got him his best clothes. His right new suit of yellow jeans, and his new shoes which Tom Lockwood, the shoemaker, had just sent home, and even a new hat which the hatter in Washington made out of good wool, were all called into service, since Berry was going to Augusta with a load

of cotton. He was expected to take two weeks for the trip, for it was seventy-five miles there and seventy-five back, and the time went slowly by to the folks at home. At last little Dick's quick ears caught Bill's loud voice, and heard the louder crack of his whip, and running down the road, he met Berry running to meet him. The little fellow was so glad to see buddy that he cried, and Mary Wood would hardly have admitted how much she felt her boy's first absence, and how anxious had been her waiting. When Berry had finished his supper his mother said :

“ Well, now, Berry, tell us all about your trip. I 'spect you've seed a power of sights, hain't you ? ”

“ Why, yes, mammie, ” and the boy spoke in the old tongue. “ I didn't know thar was so many things in the world. We had a powerful time gitting thar, and a powerful time gitting back. You know the roads are mighty bad, but we got along pretty well till we got to the creek about five miles from Washington. Uncle Crutchfield's wagon was behind our'n ;

the mud was up to the hubs, but the steers pulled away, when, as we got to the bottom of the hill, *kerchug* went the hind wheels in a big mud-hole, and thar we was. Uncle Bill got a big chunk, and some rocks and a pole, and old Sam tuck his steers and the old hoss from Uncle Cutch's wagon, and Bill popped his whip, and Sam he whipped the hoss, and Mr. Williams and me prized away, and out we come, and up the hill we went. Then we got on pretty well, and at night we camped, and I slept pretty well by the big log-fire. The next day it was a-raining, but we pulled away, and after a while we come to White Oak Creek. It looked mighty ugly, but old Bill thought we could try it, and in we went. After a while old Ball went down over his horns, and old Black, you couldn't see nothing of him but his head; but we struck the ground again, and got out safe. Well, we went on ontill Friday, and I got mighty tired, when we camped by the Quaker Spring, and next day we druv into Augusty. Whoopee! I did not know thar was so many houses in the world. They was jist

one after another, almost as thick as they could stand for nigh on to a mile. Old Bill knowed whar the store was, and when Mr. Meals came out he was mighty clever, and told us to come in the store. Mammie, you never saw such a store in your life. It was just as full of goods as it could stick. There was everything you can think of. He asked me a heap of questions, and give me a barlow knife to give to buddy, and a whole pound of candy for Sis. He said pappy used to trade with him, and said pappy was a mighty good man.

“Well, he give us just as much sugar as we could eat. You know little Tommie Williams went with us, and when Mr. Meals give him a handful of sugar, Tommie eat it up quick and said ‘I just wish I had as much sugar as I could eat. I believe I could eat a barrel full.’ Mr. Meals laughed, and he just sot Tommie in a big hogs-head full of sugar, and Tommie, he eat, and eat, like everthing, till at last he stopped. ‘Well little man,’ says Mr. Meals, ‘have you got to the bottom?’

“ ‘No, I hain’t quite that fur yit,’ says Tommie, ‘but I’ve got down where it ain’t good.’ ”

“ Well, mammie, there was more wagons and carts in Augusty, and drunk men and backer hogsheads and cotton bags than ever you seen. We got our load off at the river. It is a heap bigger than Broad or Little river, and thar was ever so many flat boats, and some of them they said was gwine away to Savannah. But, mammie, I am afear’d Augusty is a mighty wicked place. In the wagon-yard whar we staid, the men drunk liquor and played kerds and cussed and swore, so I was really afear’d to stay thar.”

“ Did my boy forget to pray ? ”

“ No, mammie, I wanted to pray more’n ever because I was that fur from home, and I hid in the wagon body, and prayed God to take care of me and he done it.”

“ Well, where did you go Sunday ? ”

“ Well, thar want but one place whar they had preaching, and old Tom and me axed the way to the church, and after all we found it. It was a way up almost out of town. It was a powerful big

church, and had a bell on it, but the bell sounded like it was cracked, and there was a lively little preacher, they called him, I think, Mr. Porter, and he preached a mighty good sermont ; but he can't preach like Brother Russell, and the folks in the church, that is the Methodist folks, they was all dressed alike, and just like the folks dress up here, but the clothes was finer. But the worldly folks they had more big feathers and more great big bonnets than I ever seen, and, mammie, most ever one of the men had on galluses and what they calls pantaloons. There warn't much shouting. Mr. Sockwell, he shouts ever time we have meeting at Grants, but there wer'n't nobody shouted in Augusty but one old woman, and she said, 'Glory,' mighty easy. Well, the next day we started home and, thank the Lord, I'm here once more, and here is Buds Barlow ; and, sis, I bought you out of my cotton money a new dress, and this one I bought for mammie. You know I had thirty pounds of cotton of my own, and Mr. Meals said it come to five dollars and forty cents, and he said your two bags weighed six hundred

pounds and come to one hundred and two dollars, and after I bought all the things you sent for I had sixty dollars left and he give me an order on Uncle Grant for it."

The simple story of travel to a small city was deeply interesting to the widow's household, and henceforth, great as buddy had been in the eyes of Jennie and Dick before, he was much greater now. He had been all the way to Augusty.

Berry was now fifteen, and was a sturdy fellow, and he began to plan for the future. Uncle Lias was married. He belonged to an estate and so did his wife, and they had to be hired out, and Berry proposed to his mother that they should take his wife and three children for the victuals and clothes, and thus they would have nearly three hands in the crop. The plan was a good one, and so Uncle Lias and Berry went to work to build a little cabin for the new family.

In those days when a new house was wanted, there were no saw and planing mills close at hand, to supply material. But there was an abundance of small pine poles, and good board timber, and

so Berry and Lias went into the woods to cut down the logs and Lias hewed the plates and rived the boards. The major's saw-mill gave them puncheons for a floor, and how do my little readers suppose they made the chimney, when there were no bricks? I will try and tell them. They made a large box of hewed timbers next to the house, and filled it with dirt, then a great bed of red clay mortar was made, and pine sticks were laid upon each other, as boys make a trap, daubed with clay; as they rose from the ground the trap was made smaller until the funnel was made. If any large stones could be found they formed the back of the chimney and hearth. The house was covered with boards, and as nails were very scarce, great poles weighted down with stones held them in their place. So the home was fixed for Elias and his family, and they were as proud of it as a king of his castle, and Berry got ready for his next year's farming.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH WE SEE AN OLD TIME CAMP-MEETING.



LIAS was a good-natured, industrious, pious negro, who loved his wife and children. His "old master," as he always called him, was dead, and so was his "old mistus." He had been well cared for while they lived, but now that they were dead, he and Mandy, his wife, were hired out at public hiring, and often separated. He had told Berry of this trouble, and this had been one reason why the thoughtful boy had devised the plan which they were now carrying out. Berry had a very clear head and Lias was a practical farmer, and they settled it that they would clean up the canebrake in the creek and deaden the branch bottom, and put the canebrake in corn and the bottom in peas, and the big field in cot-

ton. Berry and Lias should cut the brush and little trees and Mandy and the children would pile the brush and do the other lighter work. So into the thick cane and thicker swamps they went. They all worked with a will, and by the first of March the cane was ready for the firing. If my little readers could have heard that cane popping they would have thought a regiment of soldiers were firing off their guns. The brush was burned, and the ploughing was done, and the corn, and peas, and cotton were planted, and Lias and Berry put in full work with the ploughs, while Mandy, and Billy, and Sukie came on with the hoes. The good Lord helped the good workers, and the showers and the sunshine came as the crops needed them, and by the time crops were laid by the widow's heart was gladdened with the promise of a large yield.

The Widow Wood did not know much of science or natural law. She knew God and from his hand she received all these blessing as his gift to her, and her loving heart sent up a constant song of praise.

Lias was so glad to have so good a home that he worked as if it was his own crop ; and though Mandy scolded and grumbled as if it was her bounden duty to do so, yet she kept up with the ploughs and was always ready to do what Miss Mary said.

July had come and almost gone. The corn was already in full silk and had its last ploughing, and the cotton was laid by waiting for the blooming, and the days two months ahead when the picking should commence. A hundred bushels of wheat, and a loft full of sheaf oats were in the barn, and now the busy workers could rest awhile.

“Berry,” said his mother, as they sat in front of the cabin door, “the crop is done made, and camp-meeting time is next week ; so I’m thinking of gwine up to Independence to camp-meeting. Uncle Marks and Uncle Meriwether is gwine to tent, and Aunt Polly sent me word to be sure and come, and so I believe I’ll jist pack up the whole pot and biling of you and go over.”

“Well, mammie, won’t that be nice. I’ve been a thinking of it myself, but I didn’t see how we

all could go, and as I had been all the way to Augusty, I thought I'd stay at home and let you, and Sis, and Dick go."

"No, thar is no reason why you shouldn't go too. You hain't never bin, and Lias and Mandy kin stay and take care of the stock, and so we'll all go. So I'll get all your things ready and—let me see, to-day's Tchusedy—we'll go on Friday morning."

Old Bet, rather the worse for her hard summer ploughing, but faithful and strong, was hitched in the little wagon, and through Washington and over the hills they went till the camp ground was reached.

My little readers never saw a camp ground of the olden time, and I must try and give them a view of Old Independence Camp Ground nearly eighty years ago.

There was many a beautiful grove in old Wilkes then, and where now a scanty poverty-stricken little rivulet makes its way over beds of yellow sand, in those days merry brooks went dashing over pebbly beds. Near Independence

Meeting House there was a grand grove of grand old oaks. Enough of them had been cut down to open a cleared place in the forest, and seats had been made of the trees which had been cut down and of puncheons from the saw-mill near by. There was a large space on each side of the plain boxed-up platform called a stand, and in front was an enclosure called the altar. Over all the space where the seats were and the altar was, was a carpet of wheat-straw. Over all these was a shelter of branches of trees, and thus it was called an *arbor*. The tents were made at that time of logs, and were very numerous. They formed a square around the stand. There were no cooking stoves, and the busy cooks plied their trade by great log fires in the rear of the tents. The preachers had their home in the little church near by. There was no boarding tent, but everybody who came was most hospitably provided for without charge.

As the little wagon came up to camp ground on Friday afternoon, the travellers joined quite a number who were going to camp-meeting.

Some in large wagons, some in ox-carts, some on horseback, some wagons loaded with household stuff to supply some tent-holder's cabin. At last they reached the ground, when, as they asked for John Marks' tent, the old man came out and greeted them with hearty cheer.

"Here, Polly, here is Mary and the children ; come and take 'em in and see if you can git a bite for them to eat."

"Why, Mary," said Aunt Polly, "bless your heart, how glad I am to see you ; and here's Berry almost a man, and little Jennie is a real big gal ; and here's my little Dick. Well, come in, come in."

The camp-meeting services had not begun. After an early supper the little children were put to bed, and Aunt Marks and Mary went down to hear the elder give his first talk. The elder was Lovick Pierce. He was a handsome young man, not thirty years of age. He did but little more that night than to urge upon the people present to be very prayerful and careful ; to allow nothing light or frivolous about the tents,

and to be very careful of their private devotions. He said he wanted no foolish excitements. Religious excitements he did want, but none of those extravagances he had seen much of lately. He hoped all the sensible old-fashioned Methodists would frown them all down.

The crowd was large even the first night, and Brother Sockwell was there, and came in with a shout during the closing song. Berry did not have too much faith in Brother Sockwell, and had rather not have heard him shout, but supposed it had to be because it was camp-meeting.

The scene was very fascinating to the boy. There were a half dozen large stands covered with lightwood knots which shed a brilliant light over the ground, while before every tent there was a camp fire also of lightwood. The early morning service was at eight o'clock, and then the preaching of the elder at eleven o'clock, and then at three o'clock and at night.

If my young readers have read many books, they have not failed to find some rather severe things said of the old time camp-meetings and

their wild excitements, and there never was a time when there was more of it than there was at this time. I cannot defend many things nor explain many more ; but I know, despite it all, there was an immense deal of real good done in these meetings in the woods ; where for a few days they did nothing but sing, and pray, and preach.

Berry had gone to the camp-meeting not very well satisfied with himself as a Christian. He had so many thoughts he feared were wrong. He got vexed so easily. He did not want always to read his Bible. He did not like to talk in class-meeting. When they called on him to pray in public he was so scared he could not do so, and he had never shouted. He intended to get better while he was here, and so he was very careful to attend to his private devotions ; but he was more and more troubled because he could not feel more. He had listened eagerly to the preachers, but the preaching gave him little comfort. The preachers in those days strove to awaken by showing what the law was, and by

showing to people their sins. Berry felt that if this was God's law, and he knew it was, he was sadly a debtor. Had he ever been converted? If he had been would he not have lived a better life? Poor Berry; others thought him good, but he saw only his faults. The second morning after he reached the camp ground he heard a sermon which completely upset him. There had not been a great deal of excitement and yet there had been some religious movement the night before. It was the eight o'clock sermon, and Uncle Bob Harris and Brother Bob Peacock were sitting in front of Brother Marks' tent and were talking together somewhat dolefully.

"Well, Brother Harris, you are not tenting this year."

"No, Brother Peacock, I don't feel able to stand the expense; my crop has not been good, and times is mighty hard, and then I am afeard camp-meetings don't do no good no how. Tain't like it used to be."

"That's just what I've been a thinking, Brother Harris. I tell you the Methodists are

not like they used to be. When old Le Roy Cole was in Brunswick, in old Virginny, we had meetings as was meetings, and it didn't cost nothin' neither, but now we have to feed I don't know how many folks and nobody gits religion. Why, there hain't bin nobody to the mourners' seat but two little children. Now you know, Brother Harris, yourself, that boy of Evans' what went to be prayed for last night didn't know what he was a doin'."

"No, Brother Peacock, he didn't. What does a little chap like that know about conviction, and law work, and the pains of hell? I tell you we are makin' the way to heaven too easy, as shure as you are born. I really do think we are deceivin' folks by leadin' them to think religion is sich an easy thing to git. The fact is, I was a seeker nigh on to four years, but when I got it, I got it. I weren't none of your still-born Christians, that I weren't, and I don't believe in 'em."

"Nor me nuther, but thar's the horn a blowin', let us go down and hear Brother Thomson.

He'll give us the old-time gospel, or I'm mightily mistaken in him.

Brother Thomson was a local preacher of fame in that section of the country. He was noted for his poverty, his humility, and his stern piety. He had been a very bad man until he was forty years of age, then he was converted. There was no mistaking his sincerity. His plain garb, his utter indifference to the world's praise or blame, was unaffected. He never laughed: a smile rarely lit up his face. He was pitiless in denouncing sin and the sinner; but when he himself was struck by a ruffian, he bore the blow meekly and spoke no harsh word in return. He saw in the Gospel only a sterner, purer law than Moses taught; and he asked no more than he gave himself. His sermon was the strongest statement of what was involved in loving God with all the heart; and now he said in conclusion: "Well may the Lord say: 'The way is narrow and few there be who find it.'

"My brethren, the reason why men live so blamefully is because they have never been con-

verted. They think they have, but they have not. I was brought up in the Church of England, I was taught the catechism. I had a good mother, I was confirmed, I lived uprightly and honestly, I thought I was a good Christian. I went on this way till I was almost grown a deceived pharisee. Then I fell into gross sin, and down and down I went. I was nigh hell. I was awakened. I could not sleep. If I shut my eyes I seemed to see the blue sulphur flames of hell. I could not eat. My friends thought I was crazy. Oh, I was like a pelican in the wilderness. I came near to death, and, at last, I was converted. I was saved through and through, and I have had no use for sin since that time. I have had no doubts nor fears. I think if you have them it is because you never knew the Lord. Oh, I beg you don't deceive yourselves! Give up your false hopes. Seek, seek to know the sorrows of hell that you may know the joys of pardon."

Every word the stern old man spoke came from his heart. His dark eye flashed. His

sepulchral voice rang loud and clear, and each word went as an arrow to the heart of Berry.

The old man evidently believed that all hearts must feel as his did.

The age and the sanctity of the old preacher made his sermon more impressive, and Berry decided that he was mistaken, and cast away his confidence and counted himself as a condemned sinner who had never been converted. He began to search into his heart, but he found nothing there to help him. He tried to feel, but he could not. He began to fear lest he had passed his day of grace. For twenty hours he was unhappy enough for even Brother Thomson. Berry did what you may do some day. He tried to review his past and see if he had not been converted, if he had not come the right way into the wicket gate of which he read in the "Pilgrim," and the more he tried to go back over the past the more miserable he became.

Thus it went on with the boy. The tide of religious feeling rose higher and higher. If I were to tell you all that occurred you would

hardly think it could have been possible. That men fell like they were dead. That men who had come to the meeting to ridicule would jerk like they were in spasms. That women would lose their consciousness, and remain like dead people for twelve hours. There was loud crying, and deep groaning, and joyous shouting. Berry's mother was among the happiest, and she and Aunt Polly Marks got happy and shouted and shook hands with their brethren and sisters; but poor Berry found no comfort.

The last night of the meeting came; the young elder was to preach. He said in his sermon: "Do not let others affect your faith. Men differ, and experiences differ. You are to come to Jesus. It doesn't matter whether you have or haven't been converted. Come to Jesus now. Come like you would have come to Him when He was here. Come just as you are. Give up your life to Him. Tell Him you will trust Him, living or dying, in darkness or light. You must. You can. You will believe that He will save you now."

This was what Berry needed. He went at once to the altar, and this was what he said :

“ O Lord, I don't know whether I've got religion or not. I know I am a sinner anyhow, and I know Jesus died for sinners. I know He is a good Saviour, and I know you're a good Father, and I am a gwine to trust You, and love You, and mind You all the days of my life. Now, my dear Father, let me feel what I know ; but if I don't feel it I am a gwine to believe it anyhow.”

A sweet glow passed over his soul, and doubt and darkness fled away—and fled away to come again no more.

The family returned on Wednesday to their home as happy a group as the blue sky covered.

Henceforth Berry had two strong props for his religion. He said when he was an old man that from his boyhood he had been trying, first, To obey God in everything ; second, To trust in Jesus it mattered not how he felt. I think these two principles will make any of us as happy as they did Berry.

CHAPTER XVI.

BERRY GOES COON-HUNTING.



THE time of rest on a farm is never for a long period, and as for that I find farmers have about as much time to idle as anybody else, and so Berry and Lias had to go into the canebrakes to pull fodder. This is rather an uncomfortable business, as many of my little readers have long since found out; but Berry had not counted on a life of ease, and so he manfully kept side by side with Lias as they stripped the tall stalks of their blades and hung them in little bunches, which Mandy and Billy gathered up. Do my little readers know that Indian corn is really a gigantic grass and the blades of the corn form the hay crop of the Southern planter? It is quite an important crop, and much would be the suffering among the horses and mules if their fod-

der crop were to fail. This year the widow Wood had several high and broad stacks of fodder and the peas and the new ground corn.

The cow pea is a kind of bean. It is called a cow pea I suppose because the cows find it such good food. It is not bad food for little boys and girls, and when rice and peas are cooked together with bacon, and Hopping John is the result, the dish is not to be despised. The cotton which you see in great bales in the markets is just the covering which dame nature puts around the seed of the cotton plant. The seed in those days was used for fertilizing and for food for cows.

The crop year had been a good one and the widow found she would have eight right heavy bags of cotton to go to Augusta when the major sent down his crop, unless she could find a purchaser near home. The corn yield had been large and the squirrels were having a good time foraging on the widow's corn.

"Mammie," said Berry, "them squirrels is eating our corn, and I'se a gwine to eat some of

them squirr'ls to get even," and so for some days the crack of Berry's rifle was frequent and every crack brought a fat squirrel, but there was one foe who gave him more trouble than the squirrels and the birds, and that was the coon. The sly raccoon came out of the swamp at night and made quite an inroad and then he hid away in the deep swamp in a hollow tree.

Berry had been charging the squirrels and crows with a theft of which they were not alone guilty, when Lias said to him :

"Mas Berry, de ole coon bein' a-doin' dis devilment, and if I live I'm a gwine to git Daddy Mingo's Bose dog, he is powerful for coons, and we'll wake ole Zip up ; and Mas Jack Crutchfield and Mas Daniel Grant has got some hounds, and I'm bound dey'll be in for a coon hunt, and so I will fix up, and we'll have baked coon for dinner for sartin."

Daddy Mingo had the "rhumatiz mighty bad, but a good possum hunt or a good coon fight helped him powerful," he said. It made him kind of forget his misery.

The lightwood was gathered and made ready for torches. The boys came over before supper, and Daddy Mingo and Bose were on hand. About eight o'clock the hunters went down to the cornfield, and soon Bose's bark told that old Zip was at work on the corn. The hounds and Berry's big cur and Buddy's little fice joined in the race. The hunters plunged into the creek swamp and made their way after the eager dogs, until at last the bay of the dogs told that the coon was treed. He had taken to a sycamore and was high up, but not so high that the torches could not shine his eye.

"There he is boys," said Jack, "away up in the crotch. Don't you see how his eyes shine? Why, there's two of 'em. Whar's the axe? Come, Uncle Lias, cut away." The dogs drew off while the axe man struck sturdy blows.

"Take care of the dogs. Look out, down she comes. Hurrah! turn 'em loose. Ketch him, Sall—hoop, Crawford." And away they went; Zip coon could not keep ahead and he took to the creek. Under a root he hid himself when the

dogs came dashing up, and into the water they went. The coon put his back against the bank and snapped and snarled and bit. The hounds dashed at him, but soon came howling back badly bitten and scratched. Bud's plucky little Fice came near being drowned, but the big battle was between the coon and Bose. Bose was an old coon dog and knew the coon's tactics, and when the coon caught at his nose to hold him under the water Bose made a sudden jump and caught him by the back of his neck, and drew him to land. The other dogs now ingloriously piled themselves on the poor corn thief, and, in less time than I can tell it, Old Zip coon was limp and lifeless. The dogs were driven off, and Lias said to Berry, "Now, Mas Berry, you'll have a new cap, and we'll all have coon and taters for dinner."

I know that my description of the battle is a tame one ; but the fight was a gallant one, none the less. The coon was a splendid fellow, and his forays on the cornfield since roastin'-ear time had fattened him for the pit. Lias was a royal hand at a barbecue, and when the second

coon was caught the invitation was given to all the hunters to join in a dinner of barbecued coon the next day.

The coon skins were stretched on the barn door and were to be used to make the two boys a cap apiece, and Lias got the "carcasses," as he called them, ready for a barbecue. The barbecue I have never seen anywhere but in Georgia; but I think it came in with the old English settlers. It is going out of fashion, much to the sorrow of the epicure. For, after all, there are few more toothsome dishes than a fat young coon well barbecued. Lias dug his pit early in the morning and had his green hickory wood blazing away before daybreak, and when there was a fine body of blazing coals two coons well prepared were stretched over the pit, and were well basted and well cooked for dinner.

A Georgia home of the humblest people in those days gave all that was needful for a good dinner, and while the bill of fare is not such as you get at a great hotel it was sufficient for the healthy appetites of the boys.

Perhaps it might interest you, for confidentially I must confess a fondness for what is written about eating, to tell you what they had for dinner :—Bacon and collards, corn bread, biscuit, chicken pie, barbecued coon, dried peach puffs, dried apples stewed, buttermilk, sweet milk, sweet potatoes, turnips and fried squirrels.

The dear widow had done her best to give them a good spread, and all she gave came from her own place and cost nothing but the labor of their busy hands.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WIDOW WOOD ENTERS THE SLAVE MARKET AND BUYS A SLAVE.



Y little readers have heard of slavery, and they have heard little good said of it, and I am persuaded they have heard much that never was true. And if they suppose that no good people had slaves, and all who had them were cruel to them, and that the slaves were never happy and never grateful, they are sadly mistaken. I am glad for many reasons there is no slavery now, and yet I am very doubtful as to whether the poor negro is better or happier in many cases now than he was then. Some men are much worse than their laws, and some men are much better than theirs, and thus it was in those old days.

The Widow Wood had never owned a negro,

nor had her father before her, and she might never have owned one if she had not been so good a woman.

Lias was a hireling, and he was a faithful man. I have already said his old master was dead, and that he was an estate negro. The heirs of the estate were in the Natchez country on the banks of the Mississippi. Lias had been hired out for several years, but the time for the winding up of the estate had come, and Lias had to go to Natchez or be sold in Wilkes. It is useless to deny that in those old days it was possible to sell a man away from his family, because he was a slave. I blush while I write it. I am ashamed of it, as my father was before me; but it is just as useless to deny that such things, though possible, were not common. Lias had found out the fact that he was to go, and was in great trouble.

"Mas Berry," he said, "I don't want to take to de woods. My old massa never, sens I was growed up, laid his hand on my back. I never bin a runaway yet, and I don't want to do it

now ; but I don't see how I kin go to dat Natchez, and leave Mandy and de childern. I bin to Mas Tom Grant, and axed him to buy me ; but he say de rules of de Society is agin it, and it 'pears like de Lord done forsook me. I been a prayin' mighty hard, but it looks like my prars ain't gwine to keep me from going ; ef Miss Mary could jest buy me, I could stay wid her and work it out ; but I don't see how she can do 'em. I tink last night when I done praying, I heered a voice, saying, 'Lias, you just stood still—the Lord he is a comin',' and sometimes I think he is, den I t'ink he ain't, and I gets mightily down."

The great tears ran down his black cheeks as he spoke, and Berry's face glowed with indignation at the thought of Lias being taken to Natchez.

As they sat by the lightwood fire in the evening, Berry said :

"Mammie, Lias is got to go to Natchez next January, unless somebody will buy him, and I am thinking maybe we could buy him, and pay

part of what he cost with our cotton crap, and maybe next year we could work out the rest of the debt."

"Well, Berry, I feel mighty sorry for poor Lias, and I'd be mighty glad to keep him; but I've bin a-wantin' to give you some schulin', and then I don't like goin' in debt; and then I don't know whether it's right to buy a nigger, for our discipline says it is agin our rules to buy and sell slaves."

"Well, mammie, I can stay away from schule a while longer, and as to the debt, we can pay half of it this year, and next year we can pay the rest; and then, mammie, the Society never meant we was not to do good by buying a nigger, 'cause it says in the rules we must do good to all men, and we are buyin' Lias for his good and Aunt Mandy's. I tell you what I'll do: I get the major to buy him, and give him our cotton, and then we'll pay him, and ef we never do it, he's got Lias, and we've jest lost our money and our work."

"Well, Berry, you can have your way."

Berry rose bright and early, and rode to the major. The major has not appeared to us often, but he met Berry nearly every week, and the more he saw of the boy the better he liked him, and when Berry told him what he wished, he said at once :

“Well, my young man, you must have your way. I told Lias I couldn't buy any more niggers, but I reckon I'll have to buy him for you ; and I'll take the bill of sale, and if you can't pay for him I'll pay you back your money and keep the nigger. I've ginned your cotton, and I'll ship it to Augusta and get your groceries, and credit your note with the amount it brings. So you can tell Lias to be easy. He will not go to Natchez, unless he steals something, or takes another wife, and then off he goes to the first speculator.”

So Berry bought a slave.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WIDOW WOOD HEARS SOME UNEXPECTED NEWS.



R. GIBSON, the Natchez heir, was a good man, and was not unwilling to sell Lias at a moderate price, and so the major paid him the four hundred dollars and took Berry's note for the amount. He said that he wanted Berry's note, and not his mother's, because Berry made the trade, and Lias, happy in the new ownership, gave himself with new zeal to work on the farm.

Berry had given up all expectation of going to school, and cheerfully accepted the situation. When the widow's cotton was sold and the needful groceries bought there was two hundred dollars' clear profit to credit on the note, and though the major insisted that Berry should go to school and he would wait for his money,

Berry as stoutly declared that he would not go till the note was paid. The next year's crop was again prepared for. The new ground was taken in, the rest of the cane-brake made ready for corn. Ten acres were put in wheat, and as many in oats ; the winter's wood was stored away, and a crop was pitched which demanded full and steady work. Mandy and the children were hired again at the same rate, and while Jennie and Dick trudged their way to school the faithful Berry went to his work with constant regularity.

Nor was he, nor had he been, neglectful of his church or of his books. He was now a young class-leader, and when Brother Grant was not present he raised the tunes, and prayed in public when he was called on.

One day about June Thomas Grant rode over to the widow's home, and when he had taken his seat, said, somewhat abruptly :

"Sister Wood, have you got your grandfather's family Bible, with the family record, in it?"

"Yes, Uncle Grant ; you know I'm my pappy's

only child living, and I've kept the old book mighty keerful. Would you like to see it?"

"Yes, bring it to me."

She searched through the old chest, and brought out an old-time Bible with a buckskin cover over the black leather.

Mr. Grant looked eagerly for the record and his face lit up as he read :

Thomas Allen was born^d in Powhatan Co., Va., Feb'y 1, 1726.

Mary Johnson was born^d in New Kent Co. in Apl, 1728.

Thomas Allen was married to Mary Johnson in April 24th, 1748, by Parson Smith.

Mary Allen was born^d in Jan'y 10, 1749.

Billy Allen was born^d Oct. 1, 1751.

Betsy Allen was born^d Nov. 1, 1753.

Thomas Allen was born^d Dec., 1756.

James Allen was born^d Jan'y 1st, 1758.

DIED.

Mary Allen died June, 1751, aged 2 year.

Billy Allen died Dec., 1757, aged 11 year.

Mary Allen my *wife* died in 1783.

Thomas Allen died in Powhatan, Va., 1786, aged 60 year.

The face of Brother Grant brightened as he looked over the record, and he took from his pocket a letter, which he read to Mary.

RICHMOND, Va., June 1, 1800.

THOMAS GRANT, ESQ.,

WASHINGTON, WILKES Co., GEO. :

SIR,—I write to you to see if you can discover in your county the heirs of James Allen, Esq., of the County of Powhatan, lately deceased.

Thomas Allen, his father, had two sons, Thomas and James. Thomas went to Georgia in about 1775, and died there. James remained here, and has never married. He had a good property, and died without a will. The children of Thomas Allen are his heirs if they can be discovered. The amount of the estate is \$5,600, which sum is, by order of the Chancellor, deposited in the Richmond branch of the

United States Bank. Please make inquiry and let me hear from you.

Resp'y,

ALEX. HUNTER,

Att'y for administrator estate James Allen.

The widow was at first dumb with astonishment ; then the tears of joy came gushing from her eyes as Brother Grant said :

“ Well, Mary, thar will be no trouble in establishing your claim, and you will be a rich widow yet.”

“ Oh, Uncle Grant, God has been so good to me. Since poor Dick died he has been truly a husband to the widow, and I want to send for Berry and let us have pra'r.”

The horn sounded, and Berry, astonished to hear it at such a time, and a little alarmed, threw the plough-gear off of his colt and came at a sweeping gallop to the house. He was the more alarmed when he saw Brother Grant in the house and his mother in tears.

Rushing in, he said : “ What's the matter, mammie ? Tell me quick—what's the trouble ? ”

Uncle Grant looked at the excited boy, and said, with a quaint smile :

“The trouble is, your mother’s uncle has left her a little fortune in Virginia, and I am afraid you’ll have to quit ploughing and go to school.”

The story was soon told. Uncle Grant had no difficulty in establishing the claim of the widow to the estate, and the money was placed to his credit, and he gave the widow his receipt for \$5,500, to be paid on demand.

“Now, Berry, you shall have an eddication, for you’ve fairly arned it,” said the mother.

“No, mammie, not quite yet. We’ve got to have some more land, and you’ve got to have a cook, and we must buy Aunt Mandy, so she can’t be sold away from Uncle Lias, so I’ll jest work on a while and go to school next year.”

The major was paid, Mandy and the three children were to be bought, and Lias’ younger brother was to be kept from going to Natchez and the rest of the bequest was left with Thomas Grant at good interest. I spoke long time ago

of Bud Phillips who gave Berry so much trouble at his first school. His father's farm adjoined the Widow Wood's. There were 350 acres in it, and it was first-class land. Unhappily, Bud's father was a drunkard; he was a poor manager, and got deeply in debt. As the major rode by in November he called Berry to the fence and gave him a copy of the *Augusta Chronicle* of October 8, 1810. As Berry was reading it he read the following notice:

WILKES COUNTY SHERIFF'S SALE.

Will be sold before the Court House door in Washington, Wilkes County, on the first Tuesday in November, the following property, to wit: One tract or parcel of land on Little River—bounded by the lands of the Widow Wood, John Crutchfield, and Thomas Grant; said land, originally a head-right of Thomas Clark, now levied on as the property of Thomas Evans, to satisfy sundry fi. fas., to wit: Ferdinand Phanzey vs. Thomas Evans, Meals and Calhoun vs. said Evans, and George Walton vs. said Evans; said

tract or parcel of land containing 350 acres, more or less.

“Mammie,” said Berry, “that’s the land we want, and I’m going, if you say so, to get Uncle Grant to bid it in for us.”

No one knew of the bequest. The widow dressed as plain as ever, and so did Berry, and worked as hard. Only Brother Russell was a little taken back when the widow handed him a ten-dollar gold piece as a present, and told him that was poor pay for mighty good preaching. In those days, when the people who loved the preacher felt that the best service they could do him was to keep him poor, this gift was rather princely.

The sale day came off. Mandy and her children were to be sold, and, as we have said, they were bought for \$1,000 for the Widow Wood; and when the land was sold, and it was bought by Thomas Grant for the Widow Wood for \$2,100, great was the astonishment of the neighbors, all except the major and Brother Grant,

who knew of the God-send, as the widow called it.

“Now I reckon the widder ’l git a new bonnet and quit warring that old sunshade, and I hope Berry ’l git somethin’ beside that old coon-skin cap,” said Mary Snifles, who was a trifle jealous.

Uncle Marks and Aunt Polly came to Wilkes to eat a Christmas turkey with the widow and Uncle Grant, and the major and his wife came over to join them; and when, after dinner, the good old people had smoked their long-stemmed pipes, and the company were going away, the widow brought out the old family Bible which had brought such good fortune, and said: “Now, Uncle Marks, read us a chapter and let us have pra’r, and let the good Lord hear what he knows—how thankful our poor hearts are.” And they sung “How Firm a Foundation.” He prayed with his old-time fervor, and when they rose from their knees the major’s eyes were wet with tears. Lias and Mingo were not forgotten, and there was a happy time in Lias’ cabin that day.

CHAPTER XIX.

BERRY GOES TO SCHOOL AND MAKES UP FOR LOST TIME.



BERRY WOOD would have been called a Georgia Cracker in this day, and so he was just such a Cracker as many of our grandfathers were. I have been not a little amused and somewhat vexed at what I have read and heard of the Georgia Cracker from those who never knew him ; but I have solaced myself by the thought that the easiest thing to do is to ridicule people you never saw, and whom you do not like any too well. Berry had never had a suit of store clothes in his life. His mother had cut and made all his garments, and he never dreamed that they were not well done. They were comfortable enough, and that was enough for him. He did not think it was more than needful to

keep his clothing clean and behave himself well, to be respected and respectable. His Sunday suit was now to be used for his school suit, and he must wear it to the Academy at Washington, where Parson Simpson, the Presbyterian pastor, was teaching a houseful of boys and girls.

It must be acknowledged that Berry was rather poorly educated. A boy ten years of age in one of our graded schools knows much more of books than Berry knew at eighteen, and what made it a little worse, Berry was well grown, and while but a boy, was a young man in size. Add to this that he was very timid and awkward, and that he blushed very deeply when he was addressed by strangers.

The morning he started to Washington to school the widow did her best to fit him to make a good appearance. He had on a coat of blue jeans. It was rather short in the waist, and the sleeves were not quite long enough, and his other articles of apparel were very much of the same order.

So when he came into the school-room that

Monday morning the little town boys and girls were much amused by his appearance, and an audible titter went over the house. Mr. Simpson was a Scotchman, and his dialect was unmistakable. He had rather a stern look, but his heart was full of kindness. He said as Berry came in : " So this is Francis Asbury Wood, ees it ? Weel, Francis, what have ye learned at the schools to which ye ha' gang heetherto ? "

The old man was dressed in deep bláck, with knee-breeches and a long vest, and an old-time straight-breasted coat, and had a long cue hanging down his back. His eyes were of piercing gray, and his hair undoubtedly red and coarse. Berry was embarrassed, and he stammered out :

" I don't know nothing much. I hain't bin to schule but one year, and I am afeared I've forgot most I larned there ; but I kin read purty well, and write my name, and I kin cipher in in-trust and rule of three."

" Weel, weel, I am glad ye don't preteend to know naught that ye don't know ; so I will put ye in the grammar class and let ye review areethmetic, and ye can join in with the big spell-

ers and tak your place with the first geography. As ye have not got the books, I will give ye a copy, and ye can spend the morning at your copy-book."

It was somewhat mortifying to Berry that he was so far behind, and when he stood up in the class with little Nathan Barnett, not ten years of age, he felt the contrast; but he had come to school to learn, and learn he would.

The Friday afternoons were for declamation, and the boys did their best, for the girls were looking on; and Mollie Crutchfield was there, and Berry had not forgotten her. The first week Berry was excused, but the second he was called out.

He awkwardly went toward the desk and handed the book to the teacher. It was the old *Columbian Orator*, and Bury had learned the speech of John Adams—"Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my heart and my hand to this measure." He rose to speak, but the very room seemed to swim before his eyes, and he stammered out: "Sink or die, swim or perish, I give—I give—I give—— I forget

what's next," and down he sat. The boys laughed loudly, and the girls joined them, and even Mr. Simpson's grave face relaxed. Poor Berry! how his face burned! And as school was dismissed he heard Cora Brighton say:

"Did you ever laugh so much as you did at our Cracker boy? Ain't he a rich one?"

"I don't care what you say, Cora Brighton, Berry Wood is as good as any of your brothers. He ain't no Cracker—he's the best boy in Wilkes County."

"Heigho! Mollie Crutchfield, you must be in love with him. Do you love him for his beauty, his style, or his speaking?"

"I do like him, and I ain't ashamed of him either, for I know he's the best boy in Georgia."

Berry's wounded heart received its balm.

Berry soon got fairly to his work, and he soon found himself hampered by his classes. He one day came to his teacher and said to him timidly: "Mr. Simpson, would you mind putting me in a grammar class by myself?"

"Why, Francis Asbury, cannot ye kep up with the leetle chaps in your class?"

“Well, no, Mr. Simpson, not exactly that; I can keep up with them, but I would like to do more in a lesson than you ask them to do.”

“Ah, weel, weel. I niver let a mon complain of having too leetle to do, so ye can recite to-morrow by yoursel.”

The next day Berry went up to recite his grammar. The class had reached the verb, and Mr. Simpson had given them the indicative mood of the active verb. Berry answered all the questions Mr. Simpson asked him. Now he said the subjunctive, and on he went. Now the passive voice, and now the irregular verb, and so on, till the whole verb was rendered.

The participle, the adverb, the conjunction, were each of them recited, and the tired teacher said, somewhat testily: “Weel, Francis Asbury, if ye have gone over the whole grammar ye must tak a leetle longer to recite it.”

Mr. Simpson was a little annoyed that he had so misunderstood his awkward pupil, but he soon overcame his annoyance, and gave Berry loose rein. How the boy did study, and how he did advance! But he still wore the same old suit.


and still was the same retiring, timid boy. One day the major said to him: "Look here, my young Methodist, you must get you some new clothes. Dress and address make the gentleman, and I am tired of my neighbor being called the smart Cracker."

Berry smiled pleasantly and said: "Well, major, you know mammie made my clothes, and she has done all she could, and I don't want to make her feel bad by showing I am ashamed of her or her work; but she told me she wanted me to go to the tailor and get a new suit made for our examination, and I am going to do it."

So Berry dropped his old clothes and his old dialect, not all at once, but by slow degrees, and when the term ended in November there was not one in the school outside of the Latin classes who led Berry. The next year he pushed his studies, and at the end of it Mr. Simpson said: "Weel, Francis Asbury, as ye don't intend to study the classics, I can do no more for ye. Ye have learned all that this school can give ye of the English branches."

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

 BERRY lived a long time after the events here narrated, but I did not begin this story with the purpose of telling all about his life, but rather to tell how he won the victory over difficulties in his boyhood.

There is an idea—somewhat widespread, too—that all boys must be bad. I do not think this is true. I do not think all boys are bad. I have known more than one good man who was good all the way up. He was a good child, a good boy, a good man. I have known boys who had just such hardships to encounter as Berry Wood had, and who won as brave a victory. It is because I believe this, and want you to believe it, that I have told the story of Berry Wood's boyhood. We have gone with him till he is quite twenty years old, and we can go but little further; but as our story began with a

funeral, I think we ought to end it with a wedding. Two years at Mr. Simpson's school in such a village as Washington had made quite a change in Berry. He dropped, as we have said, his Cracker dialect. His mother, with her thoughtful eye, saw that the clothing she made him was not such as other boys wore, and told him to get the tailor to make him two suits, one of homespun for every day, and the other of good broadcloth for Sunday. So when Berry, dressed in the simple garb of a Georgia gentleman, stood up to make his speech at the exhibition, more than Mollie Crutchfield said he was a fine specimen of manhood. He would wear no clothes but those his mother made when he was at home, for none, he said, fitted him so well; "but Berry said so," added his mother, "'cause he didn't want to hurt his mammie's feelings."

He always called her mammie. He never tried to correct her Cracker dialect nor her grammar. He had too much sense to underrate people because their language was not according to the best standard, for if he did not know it, some of us do, that the very pronunciation of his moth-

er, and the very words she used, were some of them very good English in her grandfather's day. Berry did correct little Jennie and Dick, for he said he did not want them, in talking and dressing, to be unlike the people they associated with.

Berry had ceased to attend school in Washington. His two years there had been years of hard study. He had made remarkable progress. He had gone through his arithmetic and his surveying; through old Lindley Murray's Grammar and Blair's Lectures; could write well and read well, and had dropped his provincialisms, as Mr. Simpson called his Cracker language. He said to his mother:

"Mammie, I've done with school. I don't know much, but I know as much as I can learn at school. I study the languages, and I don't want to be a smatterer. I intend to send Dick to Franklin College, and Jennie to Salem; but I'm going to work hard and try to make something for you and the little ones."

The land was good; Lias and his brother and his children made, with Mandy's occasional help, with Berry all the time and Dick some of the

time, about eight good farm-hands ; and as the good Lord gave good seasons, the crops were good and brought good prices, and so the family grew more and more easy in their circumstances every year. There was a fine mill site on the creek, and Berry built a good mill, and had a wool-carder and a saw-mill ; they all paid good profits, and Berry was soon recognized as one of the leading men of the county. He did not allow his business zeal to interfere with his religious earnestness. He was made a circuit steward, and was the class-leader of the negro class, for he would not give them up, and they would not give him up. One Sunday he missed the old gray head of Mingo, and said to Tom, his fellow-servant :

“Where is Mingo, Tom ?”

“Mass’ Berry, Mingo is powerful sick. He was tuk with a misery in he side, and him say tell Pick him must come and see old Mingo, he no stay here for long. Mingo luk for ’im.”

“I’ll go, Tom. Lias, tell mammie I’ll not be home to-day, and maybe not to-night.”

They went to the major, who was very glad to see his young neighbor, and after they had

dined the major and his wife and Berry went down to see the good old man.

Mingo was right. He was near the end of his long journey. He was free from pain, and his heart was full of peace.

“Mass’ Pick ’e come, me know ’e come ; old Mingo most home. I bin tink ob de time when ’e little boy. Me tel ’e me daddy in Goulah-land was king. Dem Guinea nigger kill ’im ; but, Pick, my heavenly fader is a king—my Massa Jesus is a king, and you read in de Buk I am a king ; I go for git my crown.

“Mass’ Gabe, we be boys togedder. You lov me lik brudder—I pray for you eber’ day for forty year. I go home, I no forgit you. I pray for you over dar. Miss Julia, my good missa, we meet up dar.

“De Lord bin wid me one long day. He berry close now. I hear de angils sing—de singing git-tin’ mighty close—I must go—I must go——”

The old man sunk into a quiet repose. Toward morning he looked up and said :

“The day breaks—de horn blows—I must go,” and he was gone.

“There is the truest man I ever knew, the best friend I ever had,” said the major, as the tears flowed down his cheeks. “If I had ever doubted that Christ was a Saviour, Mingo’s life would have driven my doubts away.”

There was a great funeral among the negroes, and Berry read the burial service of our Church over the grave and went home feeling that he had one less true friend on earth.

“Why don’t Berry Wood marry?” was the often-put question in Wilkes, and “I really can’t guess” was the answer. The true reason was certainly not that he did not love Mollie Crutchfield. She had been back from Salem, N. C., for some time, where she had finished her education. She had been a busy house-keeper at home, and with a bright, cheery smile had greeted her old school-friend as he came every week to see her. Lovers came and lovers went, and Mollie was unwon—and yet Berry never offered her his hand.

He had built his mother a new home and had bought her a gig. He had long insisted that she should rest; but it was in vain—work she

would, work she must. She still dressed as she always had done, and was still the same dear, sweet old Cracker she had always been.

One night, as they sat together around the hearth, where a bright fire was blazing, she turned to him, and walking to his chair, drew his head to her breast, and giving him a tender kiss, she said:

“My son, you’ve bin the best son what ever lived. Your mammie is getting old, and she caan’t be with you long. You ought to git married. You’ve been a-loving Mollie Crutchfield a long time, and I know she loves you. You hain’t courted her ’case you think I am agin your marriage; but I hain’t. I won’t lose my son—I’ll git a darter.”

Berry had said to himself that until his mother said so he would remain single, but now that his mother wished it, the long-cherished dream of his heart was realized, and Mollie Crutchfield called him hers. How he wooed her I can’t tell you—partly because I don’t know, partly because it is none of our business.

The day of the wedding drew near. The invitations to the wedding were sent verbally.

It was literally true that there were no cards. The Crutchfield connection was very large, and the friends were many, and they were to come from all the country about. On Sunday the Quarterly Meeting was held at Grant's, and Joseph Tarpley, now a local preacher, was present. Berry said to him :

"Brother Tarpley, you preached my father's funeral sermon, you received me into the Church, and now I want you to marry me on Tuesday night to Mollie Crutchfield."

"So, so," said the old man—"so, so ! Well, I am glad you are going to marry in Society."

The afternoon came. Before sundown the crowd came flocking from all directions. They were most of them on horseback, but a few of the most able had gigs and Jersey wagons.

Little Dick, now a fine fellow of thirteen, rode his colt, but Berry took his mother and Jennie in the gig. Mary had laid aside her homespun, and was neatly dressed in a black bombazine dress, without ribbon or ruffle, with her head, now well silvered, covered with a neat, plain, cap, while little Jennie was going to stand up

with the bride. The great crowds were there, and the house was theirs.

The young folks in those days were not long about getting married, and by seven o'clock Berry, with Mollie on his arm, came in, and Brother Tarpley performed the ceremony and gave the bride his fatherly kiss; the next lip that touched hers was Mary Wood's, and as she said "God bless you, my daughter," Mollie felt it was indeed true that she had another mother-heart in which to trust.

The young folks had a royal time. They played Sister Phebe and Fishing for Love, and Thimble, and other old-time plays till ten o'clock, when all was hushed, that the prayer of Brother Tarpley might be heard.

How was the bride dressed? Well, really, I don't know. I did not look at her dress—I only thought of her sweet face.

There was an infair at the Widow Wood's, and one at Thomas Grant's, and one at David Merriwether's, and one at John Marks'. Uncle Marks and Aunt Polly came to the wedding, and insisted on a visit.

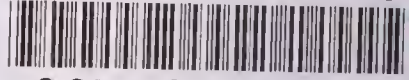
Berry took his bride in his gig, and they rode to the Quarter. "There," said he, "in that cabin, my father died, and there I promised to do three things: never to do a mean thing, never to tell a lie, and to be good to mammie and meet him in heaven."

"All the world knows, my dear Berry," she said, "how well you have kept a part of this promise, and if you fail in the other it shall not be my fault."

Mary Wood lived to have her grandchildren on her knee, to see Dick a preacher and Jennie happily married to Daniel Grant, and then sweetly, calmly, she fell asleep.

As Berry stood by her, and they thought she had gone, she suddenly looked up, her face beaming with new light. "Dick," she said, "they are all safe—I come," and the light lingered on the saintly face though the breath had fled.

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